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Sister Eden of St. Paul and her joy of healing

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Here come the furnies

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6.8 quake hits Taiyo, killing 4, injuring 300; bullet train derailed

JOB
1,600 job vacancies in 2 sections

Pimentel warns GMA 'ripe for another people power'

By Michael Lim Ubac
in Manila
and Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Leyte health care graduates help reverse brain drain

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER Sunday
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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AFP's golden parachute

Retiring chiefs of staff get up to ₱300M 'pabaon'

By Pia Zamora

SAN SETS ON MYSTICHOLAMPIN: The "mystery" island of Magas in Aroroy, Masbate, is known to the local folk as home to witches—but it is also a marine sanctuary being a bird and marine sanctuary and a "no-take" zone (meaning that one needs a permit to pick up even a single seashell, as the islanders are keen on preserving the ecological balance of the 5,000 sq.m. oasis famous mooring with hundreds of mangrove trees.

CONFESSIONS OF AN AFP SUPPLIER

'Sharing your blessings is not a crime'

By Arlyn dela Cruz
Contributor

Abaya: Man in a hurry to retire away from line of fire

By Frank Cimatu
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

GERMAN-FILIPINO couple, Michel Paul Maria Schramm and Norma Oliveta Schmitt, on the presidential palazzo in Baguio (from this).

Father of first and only Filipino doctor in German army mentor to RP generals

By Virgilio Cerezo
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2004
Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

Education crisis seen to worsen

By Doris Pascbugot

THE COUNTRY'S public schools are going through their worst crisis ever, with the shortage of teachers and classrooms likely to worsen next year owing to inadequate funding, the Alliance of Concerned Teachers warned yesterday.

ACT chair Antonio Tinio said that by next year, there would be a shortage of at least 60,000 teachers and 50,000 classrooms, based on data presented by the Department of Education during a budget hearing before the House appropriations committee.

The shortages could be higher if Congress fails to pass a new budget, which would force the national government to depend on a reenacted budget for the second consecutive year.

"Our public schools are experiencing their worst crisis ever," Tinio said.

He said the Depted's proposal to hire 5,000 new teachers and build 6,000 new classrooms in 2005 would not be enough to alleviate the problem.

In spite of these new inputs, the Depted's own figures show that enrollees and teachers must hence for a teacher shortage of 60,699 and a classroom shortage of 57,930," said Tinio.

"These are significantly higher than the current shortages of 10,535 teachers and 11,947 classrooms."

He claimed in a statement made recently by committee chair Rep. Rolando Andaya that the Arroyo administration would be having 10,000 new teachers in 2004 and 2005.

"To be accurate, the Depted hired only 5,000 new classroom teachers in 2004 and is set to hire an additional 5,000 in 2005. So that's only 12,500," Tinio said.

The rest of the new items in 2004 and 2005 are for principal and non-teaching items, such as supervisors and clerks, he said.

ACT has been castigating the Arroyo administration for not taking adequate steps to alleviate the acute shortages in the public schools.

The truth is that the creation of new teaching items under the administration has had no impact on the shortage of teachers, which has grown from 35,616 in 2001 to 49,699 in 2004," he said.

ACT estimates that the addition of P9 billion needs to be added to the current Depted budget of about P106 billion to adjust and resource shortages, provide for a P3,000 across-the-board salary increase for teachers, and subsequently fund maintenance and operating expenses of the public schools.

The Depted had asked for a P130-billion budget in 2004, which includes a budget of P970 million to hire 14,000 new teachers, instead, Congress reenacted the national budget for that year.

For next year, the Depted has asked for a P152-billion budget.

The problem of resource shortages in public schools worsens each year.

In 2003, readers placed the shortage of public school teachers at 50,000. About 13,000 new teachers have to be hired every year to maintain a 40:1 student-to-teacher ratio for the 17.9 million students in public schools.

The Depted last year said the teacher shortage was only around 19,000, but this assumed a class size of 50 pupils to one teacher.

In 2003, independent readers showed the classroom shortage is at 44,700. The education budget that year only covered 1,300 additional classrooms, or 12 percent of the total classroom shortage.

The Depted, however, said classroom shortage was only at 16,700, assuming a class size of 60 pupils to a room.

NEW TERMINAL

President Macapagal-Arroyo leaves a time capsule during ground-breaking rites for the Metro Transport Terminal of the MRT 3 located at the corner of Edsa and North Avenue in Quezon City, yesterday. Others in photo are MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando, DOTC Secretary Leandro Mendoza and QC Vice Mayor Herbert Bautista. (PI photo/JOEY)

Ombudsman to recruit citizens vs graft

By Armand N. Nocum

THE PEOPLE are mad as hell and will not tolerate corruption in government anymore.

The Office of the Ombudsman has decided to exploit this public outrage and has lined up programs to encourage people to report, monitor and stop the commission of graft.

"Ordinary citizens are angry at graft in government. Instead of whining, we want them to channel their anger, to volunteer and monitor the bidding and implementation of government projects," Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo said.

The statement came amid the corruption scandal involving top officials of the military.

One of the projects is the Ilaw sa Ahil (Light Countryside) program which will be set up before the end of the year to grab prosecutors.

Ordinary people will be given the chance to stop corruption by reporting it to action centers or i-servers.

"We also need brave citizens to help us with our entrapment operations against corrupt government personnel," Marcelo said.

Also in the works are tie-ups with church and student organizations whose members will be trained on how to spot, report and monitor graft.

"The public wants to help but they don't know where to go. We have twin priests and youth leaders. In fact, the public looked up to these daily officials and would pick them as sponsors for weddings and baptisms, as well as social activities.

To thwart this perception, the Palace launched the Isumbong ko, Pangulo (I report to you, President) program.

The program initially targets all officials of the Bureau of Customs, the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Department of Public Works and Highways, resulting in the dismissal or the suspension of a number of erring officials.

Still, Marcelo admitted, they had yet to reach the proverbial "big fish." So far, their projects only hit undersecretaries, deputy collectors and commissioners of the three agencies.

Again, he encouraged the public to report graft.

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Sister Eden and the joy of healing

By Inday G. Dyaoquil

SEE HAS trekked through perilous upland trails and climbed difficult mountains armed with a trusty guitar and triumphed sheer storms in shanghaied torpedoes in the treacherous waters she did community development work with tribal groups.

The world, then, had seemed bright and full of promise for Sister Eden Orline.

Then, the easygoing nun with a sunny disposition who had worked at a music volleyball and skateboard in school, felt something wasn't just right.

An unusual feeling

"I was always running a lean and found myself drained at the end of the day, something I was not used to despite the arduous schedule that I had kept," recalled the Lubao, Pampanga native. "I settled down to sleep, I would feel a huge boulder pinning me down."

On a routinary check, doctors found a tumor in her breast. The prognosis wasn't good: the lump had metamorphosed in her lymph nodes.

What could have been a death sentence for many—Stage 3, they said—failed not to be the beginning of a new life—and sobriety for the nun.

Sr. Eden went through five rounds of chemotherapy to arrest the cancerous cells that had multiplied—"but they had to give me double doses because, as you can see, I am quite chubby," she said. The end: hair loss, moderate to moderate nauseousness for 32 days—"except Christmas and New Year's Day."

New strength

The treatments didn't run her down. Instead, she felt she had gained new strength.

"I didn't go through the denial and lengthening stages of grief," she said. "I wanted only one thing—help in curbing and getting over the cancer."

One of the things that she overcame but found was the fact that she would have to give up the work that she loved so much—the music, the camaraderie. "I rejected the notion that I would be utterly worthless or helpless in whatever I was doing. In short, I didn't give up."

Today, four years after that grim diagnosis, Sr. Eden hardly looks scarred by the experience.

"Due to remission, remaining cancer cells had not been active," she told reporters. "Every six months, though, I need to have a check up—blood tests, X-rays, that sort of thing. After that, she'll be on an 18-to-24-month maintenance medicine so we must always enter to know if cells spread. I've made it through another six months."

The cancer did not prevent her from continuing her work with the tribes but also gave her advocacy another dimension.

"Instead of feeling defeated, or talking to a cancer and wondering why I was 'chosen' as a cancer patient, I looked at the experience in a positive light," she revealed. "I can even say that I wouldn't know how to live my life today without the experience."

Since her battle with what many call the dreaded C, Sr. Eden has made it her personal advocacy to combat cancer patients about the disease and how the battle can be fought with the right attitude and perspective.

On bedside visits, she advises patients bound by their first chemo session to "imagine the chemo medicine running through your veins like powerful rays of light killing the cancerous cells and replacing them with healthy ones. Of course, there must be faith in the therapy to complete the healing."

Faith in the household

Faith was a staple in the Orline household when the children were growing up. "I vaguely recall the religious type. As a matter of fact, I had not joined either the Society or the Student Catholic Action," confessed the nun, who said she had gotten into a few scrapes and "some naughty escapades" in her youth. Her parents were her role models. Pilot Lieutenant Calandas, Pangasinan, who was raised as a Protestant but later converted to Roman Catholicism, and Antonia Orline, a military man from Ilocos, also to Pangasinan, who was a diplomat-nun. "You never failed to show his love for us."

In their teens, the Orline girls were sent to Manila for high school at St. Paul's College, Taft, and older sister Estrellita went on to college as they came. She was the school president with a keen sense of humor. Estrellita died recently.

Sister musicians

But when it was time for career options, both chose to enroll at the conservatory of music, with Estrellita winding up as a double major (voice and music education) and Eden making it in both (voice and piano).

A scenic view she was 18 at the Our Lady of Charity convent in Antipolo, Eden eventually took the name Estrellita had taken two years before, the Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres.

After taking the vows, her mission work brought her to outposts in Cebu, Zamboanga, Ilocos Sur and Tagaloan. In Tagaloan, she trained students to make musical instruments out of native materials like bamboo. She also began composing songs, and has written about 35 hymns for church functions but always unsupportive song writing for the masses "because I am disintegrating," she joked.

Apart from her career advocacy, in October is also Breast Cancer Awareness Month). In Eden, now on temporary detail at St. Paul's Makati, directs media activities for the ceremonial celebration of the congregation which starts today with a pictorial exhibit at St. Paul's Manila.

Life had fallen into a lull. Sr. Eden's who actively work in schools, hospitals, or with the poor, Sister Eden feels strongly about her mission in life.

"In this regard, having cancer is something that I have unfinished because it gave me a chance to do more for my fellowmen, knowing that I could go anytime," she said. "I always tell cancer patients that, in a sense, we are luckier than those who don't have it because it gives us time to ponder on what we want to do with our lives."

Competitive edge

Sr. Eden's calls this her "competitive edge." "Every encounter herself for using a phrase she often admires was acquired when she was a Master's in Development Management student at the prestigious Asian Institute of Management. "Every encounter you come to, every point," she said, "and having cancer has taught me something that is so basic that it hits your heart and soul where the time of nothing comes: what have you done for him, and for your neighbor?"

Her joyful spirit is manifested by an enthusiasm for life that she knows could end tomorrow, next week, or maybe, didn't hurry in 50 years.

"I'm still struggling and it's an uphill battle, but I'd like to think I'm prepared," she said. "I know my God has given me the grace to fill my days. I'm not asking Him for more—no, for more time, or new joy; all I ask for is the moment."

Sr. Eden can be reached for consulting at 897-MAKATI. Or call 899-4333/8904000, in the evening.

SISTER Eden Orline in a picture of health and well-being as she relates her battle with cancer and how her retreat has led her to helping victims of the disease. —INDAY G. DYAOQUIL

METROBRIEFS

Mayor uncovers take tax in Taguig

TAGUIG Mayor Freddie Tinga yesterday told establishments in the town to stop charging consumers food taxes because the local government was not charging such taxes. In a press statement, the Taguig mayor's office said that the mayor made the announcement after he found out that restaurants and fastfood chains were charging customers food taxes. He added that in his inspection, he discovered that two popular food outlets were charging customers food taxes. He said that the establishments were ordered to refund the amount collected from customers. Tinga also urged business establishments in Taguig and to immediately report to his office those found illegally charging their customers in the 10 percent of the buying public. Complaints may be sourced through 838-3627 or Taguig's hot center 0908-3088410. —Nancy C. Carvajal

Another Manila inmate dies

AS THE country prepares to observe the National Correctional Consciousness Week, an inmate at the Manila City Jail died from an illness Friday. Publicity escaped Alfredo Santos, 41, also at the Manila jail after suffering from bronchial pneumonia. —By Leila B. Salaverria

Bombs, explosives found in QC lot

THE CRIME Lab, Police Intelligence Detective Security and Station Group of the Philippine National Police Anti-Terrorism Task Force Friday, at a vacant lot on Sampaguita Avenue corner Gen. Luis in Fairview, Quezon City, found an estimated 100 20-cm. rockets in a steel container. Division of Explosive Ordnance Unit 12, said to be a component of 23-caliber mortar. 10 boxes of .50 caliber ammunition bullets with warhead containing 216 pieces each, and three hundred 60 mm. mortar shells, 1,000 fragmentation grenades, and 1,000 fuse detonators. EOD Director Senior Supt. Nicanor Tadeo was quoted by the discovery.

Policemen reports from a concerned resident about armed three suspicious looking men roaming the area. —Ellen R. Tordesillas

Folk told to watch over their homes

BEFORE you leave a week before All Souls Day, the police identity restrictions Mayor Alfredo Lim wants to warn their houses unattended as they hold his commitment of go on a holiday break. If no one could be left to look after the place, they should inform their locks, advised Chief Supt. Eleuterio Valenzona of the Eastern Police District. He noted that robbers take advantage of the residents' tension to the premises to observe till Souls Day. —Lupe d. dal Rosario

Couples for Christ launches health drive

LAGRO Mayor, Couples for Christ (CFC) alternative plan of action to address the country's problems yesterday, has launched its health component called Gawad Kalusugan. Gawad Kalusugan, in a partnership with Bernard Laboratories and CFC, aims to bring them to Barangay Pinyahan, Quezon City to address tuberculosis among residents. Bernard has pledged its support in the treatment of basic blood pressure with 10 centers in many more resources and the residents.

La Union Class of 64 holds grand reunion

MEMBERS of La Union High School Class of 1964-1965 are invited to a grand reunion on Dec. 18 to be held at the Philippine Trade Training Center in Pasay City. Interested alumni will be announced later. For details, please call Jo Marie Martinez Peña at 0917-4968 or 852-7180, or at cell no. 0917-5047888. Jo Marie de La Merced, you may call Rose Garchitorena at cell no. 0917-542-5822 or Jess Bernardo at cell no. 0918-5390450.

Slain Manila policeman gets hero's farewell

By Leila B. Salaverria

IT WAS a farewell fit for a hero.

Family, friends and colleagues yesterday bade farewell to Supt. Marcelo Martinez, who was killed in a fierce exchange with gunmen in Manila's Ermita.

The 54-year-old veteran of the Western Police District (WPD) was posthumously awarded the Medalya ng Kabalikat here last week for his action in the La Funeraria Paz in Quezon City where he was honored with a 21-gun salute.

He was applauded on Monday as his was getting out of his car at the parking lot of the WPD's Station 5 police station.

Martinez's only son, Erin spoke during the necrological service of the pain that came with knowing that his father's life could never be brought back even if his killers were arrested.

Comfort in remembrance

But he said the family was taking comfort in remembering all the good he had done and all the love he had showered on them.

"We will never hear him speak as tired the moment he'll be here. But we will rest with a cheerful heart knowing he will always be a part of our hearts," he said.

"We ask each and everyone not to let anything get in the way of what we believe is right." Erin, holding back tears and his voice breaking, said. "Follow his example."

A pair of Martinez will continue to live on, as his memorial have been donated to the eye bank, an institution Martinez quietly helped by fundraising the donation of over 15,000 corneas.

Peña said his father had always reminded them that he had a risky job, and that as his only son he must be caring for the family.

Fellow policemen honored Martinez, who lost four, the ranks as he served the force for 32 years.

"Our loss is beyond words. My mouth his passage rites as we cut down the life he lived," said Director Avelino Razon, chief of the National Capital Region Police Office and a former Manila policeman.

He said Martinez always accepted duty and responsibility with an open and intelligent mind and always exhibited courage and gallantry.

Razon vowed that Martinez's legacy of doing right would live on.

"He did not die in vain," Razon said.

He also described Martinez as someone committed to the cause of peace, a summon of criminals and as the same time a loyal and loving man to his family.

"He was truly an officer and a gentleman," he said.

PNP Director Chief Supt. Avelino Razon Jr. described Martinez as a hard fighting and hard working policeman who was always efficient in doing his job.

At various times, Martinez served as commander of Manila's 11 police stations and of the station PNP's upcoming units during his career.

Manila Mayor Lito Atienza said Martinez had been a policeman who truly loved the city and did his best to make it peaceful and orderly.

"Manila was always bringing criminals," he joked, adding that the slain officer had his heart and mind in the right place.

Martinez's wife Lucila, who is the unceasing days after his death, had received calls and sympathy in interviews, broke down in mourning sobs as she went along with their three children and three grandchildren to view her husband's remains in a coffin.

She had earlier described her husband as a strict but loving man and one whose heart easily melted in compassion for others.

TEARS FOR PAPA. Lucila, the widow of Supt. Marcelo Martinez, wraps in the arms the remains of the veteran Manila policeman for the last time. The remains of Martinez were cremated earlier this

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Lacson 'perched in same tree' as Garcia, say solons

By Cynthia D. Balana

STRAINED congressmen investigating the alleged unexplained wealth of a military general yesterday took exception to Sen. Panfilo Lacson's remarks on Friday that they, too, had received kickbacks from suppliers and contractors.

Majority leader Prospero Nograles said Lacson was not only fueling up the raving over but was, in fact, "perched in the same tree" as Independent Rep. Carlos Garcia, since the former police chief had also been accused of amassing hidden wealth by the United States government.

"Senator Lacson raises questions in his-makers regarding moral authority since, like Garcia, he too was accused of having dollars and properties abroad, which became the subject of investigations by US authorities. Nothing happened in the matter, and we do not want the same happening to Garcia's case," Nograles said.

He said Lacson attributed his Garcia-to-cast aspersions on those looking into the alleged unexplained wealth of Garcia. Such "unfair criticism" against congressmen for the performance of the senator's duties by parliamentary courtesy.

Deputy Speaker for Mindanao Gerry Salapuddin said Lacson should not have assailed congressmen for investigating Garcia and other military officers for alleged graft and corruption because the issues involved belonging to the entire Armed Forces of the Philippines.

The House leaders said the committees on national defense and on banks and financial intermediaries chaired, respectively, by Reps. Jesús Golez and Jaime Lopez, were fully aware of their responsibilities.

Nograles said that based on official documents from the US attorney general, Lacson had maintained from 1996 to 2001 several accounts in American banks amounting to $1.4 million.

Lacson is facing pending criminal cases before the Ombudsman which were based on the report submitted to the Department of Justice in 2001 and 2002 under the RP-US Bilateral Assistance Treaty. Commissioner Mike I. Hilario, US attorney for the North District of California, US Attorney David W. Shapiro and Criminal Division Chief J. Douglas Wilson prepared the report.

Nograles said the senator should help in the effort to achieve the MP instead of criticizing congressmen for their efforts in investigating on the truth regarding the unexplained wealth of Garcia, Lacson's "nemesis" in Philippine Military Academy Class 1971.

What a little dinner can do

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

THE DINNER at the Palace apparently did wonders.

Malacañang yesterday dismissed fears that a continuing investigation into alleged corruption in the military's top ranks could have the morale of soldiers and spears crooky.

"We think that the primary concerns of the [military] remained at a time when we are keeping a common shot against terrorism and insurgency," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said in a statement, explaining the unscheduled dinner on Thursday which President Macapagal-Arroyo hosted for around 40 military officers and their spouses from Luzon.

"There is no need for loyalty checks," Bunye added. "The loyalty of our soldiers to the Constitution, the people and the chain of command is unbreakable."

Mrs Arroyo met with the group of generals and admirals after the military loses contained accusations that its senior officers cover the graft accusations against former Armed Forces of the Philippines comptroller Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia.

The general has been sentenced to quarantine while an investigation is going on into allegations that he amassed a total of millions of pesos on a monthly salary of less than P40,000.

Military public information officer Lt. Col. Oriard Lacsó earlier said "that these are negative sentiments from our soldiers as a result of this controversy" with some saying the spirits of the generals as an attack on the entire Armed Forces.

Bunye said troop morale remained high despite the corruption controversy.

"The moves against high level corruption are being taken in a positive light as part of the overall effort to uphold military justice and professionalism," he said.

Bunye said Mrs Arroyo used the dinner to explain what was being done about the corruption cases involving senior military officers.

"Explanations were given and the President explained what was happening and, as a response, those present said they were supporting the chain of command," Bunye said in an ANC interview. ■With an AFP report

Over 6,000 Filipino workers now in Iraq

By Cynthia D. Balana

[illegible] the government's ban on the deployment of Filipino workers to Iraq, a total [illegible] of them have made it into the war-torn country.

This was revealed by Rep. Roilo Golez, chair of the House committee on appropriations, which is conducting hearings on the proposed budget of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Andaya said the DFA admitted that about 20 percent of the total number of Filipino workers in Iraq may have been recruited illegally.

"These are the Filipinos who campaign to take the government ban on their deployment to the most dangerous country in the world today," he said. "Iraq Pilipinong nagpupilit kahit sa Iraq kahapit (The desperate Filipino would even dig into Iraq)."

Andaya said this could mean there were more than Filipinos in Baghdad than in Rizal, Batanes, Batanes in the northernmost province of the Philippines and the most typhoon-ravaged each year, forcing many people like them.

Filipinos are spread out in at least eight areas in Iraq, including Fallujah, Ramadi and even Saddam Hussein's hometown of Tikrit.

Based on the DFA's latest count, there are 2,500 Filipinos in Camp Victory; 1,000 in Camp Anaconda; 1,000 in Camp Cooke; [illegible] 400 in Mosul; 300 in Tikrit; 50 in Baquba; 50 in Basrah; and 800 in Fallujah, Ramadi, Al Asad and Sadr City.

Andaya said most of the Filipinos were working in US camps like Victory and Anaconda, which are secure, doing support work for the American soldiers.

He said the DFA figures did not include Filipino drivers who dash in and out of Iraq from surrounding countries to supply convoys manned by US soldiers.

During the last hearing on the DFA budget, Andaya asked department officials why civilian American workers were getting paid $80,000 to $100,000 for a year's work in Iraq, while Filipinos hired for the same [illegible] work were paid only $12,000 per year.

FAREWELL TO A GRANDFATHER

The grandchildren of former Supreme Court justice Enrique Fernando bid by James Fernando Cabrera, 6, left, lay flowers on his grave during interment rites at the Libingan ng mga Bayani yesterday. Fernando served during the regime of President Marcos. Behind is former first lady Imelda Marcos.

DOLE: 42 labor pacts protecting OFWs worldwide

By Jerome Aning

THE DEPARTMENT of Labor and Employment reported on Friday that the Philippines has signed 42 bilateral labor agreements with 15 countries hosting overseas Filipino workers since President Macapagal-Arroyo assumed office in 2001.

The agency wants more BLAs forged to ensure the protection, welfare and competitiveness of the more than eight million OFWs worldwide, said Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas.

In the land-based survey, six sectors are in focus and provide for the welfare and employment of land-based OFWs in the technical, medical, information and communications technology fields in five major host economies, namely the United Kingdom, South Korea, Taiwan, Norway and Switzerland.

The OFWs covered by the accords are protected from exorbitant placement fees and illegal recruiters.

For the maritime sector, Department of Labor and Employment accomplished 26 agreements with 13 countries worldwide in compliance with the regulations of the International Maritime Organization's standards on training, certification and watchkeeping, Sto. Tomas said.

She said the maritime accords recognizing Filipino seafarers' certificates attest to the world-class standards and excellence of Filipino workers who account for 26 percent of the world's seamen.

According to Department of Labor undersecretary for International Labor Affairs Bernie Olalia, the 21 countries and territories that signed an agreement with the Philippines between 2001 and 2006 for the recognition of seafarers' certificates were Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bermuda, Cambodia, Cyprus, Denmark, Dominica, Georgia, Greece, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Ireland, Isle of Man, Italy, Kuwait, Liberia, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Norway, Panama, Singapore, Sweden, the Netherlands and Germany.

"These accords have been forged in line with the thrust of the present administration: that priorities the OFWs," Sto. Tomas said.

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DSWD exec convicted of graft

By Philip C. Tubeza

FOR SOME second-hand typewriters instead of new ones, they got fairly long prison terms.

The Supreme Court has upheld the conviction for graft of a former assistant regional director of the Department of Social Welfare and Development who approved the anomalous purchase of more than P200,000 worth of typewriters.

In a 15-page decision, the tribunal affirmed the Sandiganbayan ruling convicting former DSWD Cagayan Assistant Regional Director Nimfa H. Dagpoon and her accomplice, Jesse G. Gallangen, for violating the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act.

"[Dagpoon] accepted the second-hand typewriters, contrary to the requirement to buy brand new units, and allowed payment for them at the price of brand new units," the tribunal said in a decision penned by Associate Justice Leonardo Quisumbing.

"Without hesitation, we find that his evasive action defrauded and caused injury to the government," it said.

Dagpoon and Gallangen, who supplied the typewriters, were each sentenced to from six months years to prison and ordered to jointly indemnify the government P7,040.

The court said the government paid P200,000 for the typewriters when the actual cost of the "refurbished/reconditioned" ones was only P141,800.

A third accused, supply officer Angelo Hipolito, died while at large.

Dagpoon was also perpetually disqualified from holding public office.

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Lawmaker scores Napolcom silence

By Cynthia G. Balana

ZAMBOANGA del Sur Rep. Antonio Cerilles yesterday questioned the National Police Commission's seeming lack of interest in investigating anomalies and allegations of corruption in the Philippine National Police.

Cerilles reminded Napolcom that Republic Act No. 6111, or the 1990 Reform and Reorganization Act, of which he was one of the principal authors, empowered it to investigate anomalies and irregularities in the police force.

"Bahid nalk for lifestyle checks on police officers and reports of alleged anomalies involving the conversion of funds, the cashing of checks of suspected, falsified and fabricated documents, and the placing of a seized Jaguar sedan in the custody of a police general, the Napolcom has surprisingly been silent," Cerilles said.

With the mandate of Napolcom, he said, the police force should not only solely on its Internal Affairs Service (IAS) to investigate erring policemen.

Like Napolcom, however, the IAS has been getting flak for being a toothless watchdog, Cerilles said.

"We want to know what Napolcom has done in terms of investigating anomalies in the PNP and making recommendations to eradicate the problem," he said.

The same law mandates Napolcom to render to the President and to Congress an annual report on its activities and accomplishments.

LGU road show earns plaudits

INTERIOR Secretary Angelo Reyes recently commended the Philippine-Canada Local Government Support Program (LGSP) for organizing Governance Caravan 2000.

Reyes described the caravan as "the first of its kind in the Philippines, as it showcases the innovations, strategies, tools and technologies introduced and utilized by outstanding local government units, as well as government and non-government agencies engaged in promoting and sustaining good local governance."

He noted that "exemplary and replicable practices of local government units highlighted in the caravan a confirmation of local government capacities and the impact they have made in the lives of their constituents."

The caravan is a four-site road show of activities cum fora showcasing the achievements and contributions of the LSGP and its LGU partners, as well as other government and non-government organizations toward good governance and service-building.

The next caravan will be at the Grand Legend Hotel in Cagayan de Oro City on Oct. 28-29.

Among the highlights will be the launching of the Local Governance Performance Management System (LGPMS) in the region; a policy forum on participatory governance; a Lakbay-Aral tour to Misamis, Lanao del Norte; a dialogue on the executive and legislative agenda being formulated by local officials all over the country, and lectures on the replicable practices of LGUs.

The expo will wind up at the Limketkai Convention Center in Davao City on Nov. 3-10. The highlight will be the awarding of the Bayanihan Seal of Excellence to local Government units.

Supreme Court Doctrines

GENERAL LIN CORONAL PRONOUNCES—Waiver of constitutional safeguard against double jeopardy is apparently limited to trial court considerations—An appeal from the sentence of the trial court implies a waiver of the constitutional safeguard against double jeopardy and throws the whole case open to review by the appellate court. The latter is then called upon to review judgments as law and justice dictate, whether favorable or unfavorable to the appellant. This is the rule involved when the accused decides to appeal a sentence of conviction. Indeed, appellate courts have the power to reverse, affirm or modify the judgment of the lower court and to increase—or reduce the penalty it imposed. If the present appeal is given course, the whole case against the accused-appellee becomes open to review. In this fullness that spreads before them, the whole law already turns in favor of the accused-appellee. Hence, the rule that once placed in jeopardy for an offense he cannot be tried for it again or be subjected to a greater punishment than that prescribed by the trial court may be invoked on his behalf. Without the appeal would thus violate his right against double jeopardy, since the judgment of conviction would become subject to modification without his consent. We are not in a position to counsel against the reasons why the accused effectively waived this right to appeal by jumping bail. It is clear, though, that private respondent's unjustified motive in taking his flight against double jeopardy [Citations omitted.] (Justice Panganiban, First Overseas Philippine Bubble Bus Corp., Inc. vs. People, G. R. No. 142783, April 14, 2000)

By G. S. Vitto

Tribe seeks end to mining on holy mount

By Norman Bordadora

MEMBERS of the Subanon tribe yesterday rallied on Freedom Monument Circle to urge the Canadian firm to stop its mining operations on a Zamboanga del Norte mountain that they hold sacred.

Datuday Jose Aloy, leader of the Subanon tribe, said the group was a signatory to the St. Paul-based Peoples Rights Act 2004 and had been awarded a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title covering their settlement on Mt. Canatuan in Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte.

The Subanon have been living on Mt. Canatuan since the 17th century.

"We entered into the Tipo and were awarded a certificate of ancestral domain title. Thus, we cannot understand why the government is allowing Toronto Ventures Inc. to operate [there]," Aloy said at a news conference in Quezon City yesterday.

Aloy said the mining firm had desecrated the Subanon's "altar" and its most sacred spot, the peak of Mt. Canatuan.

"[Toronto Ventures]... has no respect for our people and our way of life. They built [there] the tip of the mountain, [from which] we must both pray, and is a matter of wonder, our community will be wiped out due to [how much time he] gold," Aloy said.

The tribal leaders said they had met with officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, and the Commission on Human Rights to demand a stop to the mining operations.

"But our appeals have been ignored by those opposed to protect our community and environment," he said.

Stingray to boost tourism—Ace

TOURISM Secretary Joseph Ace Clarete yesterday described the capture Sarah's movement provide "greater need and added impetus" to his task of "proactive search and more intelligence operations" that include the physical inspection of how travel destinations.

Antonio Aning

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Sunday, October 24, 2004
30th Sunday in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Sir 35:12-14, 16-18

The Lord is judge and shows no partiality. He will not disadvantage the poor, he who hears the groans of the oppressed. He does not disdain the plea of the orphan, nor the complaint of the widow. The man who serves God wholeheartedly will be heard; his petition will reach the clouds. The prayer of the humble pierces the clouds, and he is not consoled until he has been heard. He prays will not cease until the Most High has looked down, until justice has been done to those of the righteous.

2nd Reading: 2 Tim 4:6-8, 16-18

As for me, I am already poured out as a libation, and the moment of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness with which the Lord, the just judge, will reward me on that day; and not only me, but all those who have longed for his glorious coming.

At my first hearing no one supported me; all deserted me. May the Lord not hold it against them. But the Lord stood at my side, giving me strength to proclaim the word fully, and let all the pagans hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. The Lord will save me from all evil, bringing me to his heavenly kingdom. Glory to him for ever and ever. Amen!

Gospel: Lk 18:9-14

Jesus told another parable to some persons fully convinced of their own righteousness, who looked down on others. "Two men went up to the Temple to pray; one was a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and said: 'I thank you, God, that I am not like other people, grasping, crooked, adulterous, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give the tenth of all my income to the Temple.'

"As the unscrupulous tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast saying: 'O God, be merciful to me, a sinner.'

"I tell you, when this man went down to his house, he had been set right with God but not the other. For whoever makes himself out to be great will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be raised."

Commentary

The Greek word from which we derive "hypocrite" means "to play a part." From there it came to mean an actor in a play. And from there it came to mean anyone who is insincere in speech or action. Incidentally, the word "person" also has a stage connection. This one comes from sonity, per (through) and sonare (to sound). In ancient times actors wore masks over their faces and "spoke through" them. In this way, every person is capable of being an actor hiding his or her real self and displaying a mask that makes them look like a great hero or a god. Words change their meaning with the centuries, but human nature doesn't seem to change very much.

Jesus didn't hesitate to throw around the word "hypocrite" presumably because it was the right one! I counted fifteen times he used it in the gospels. "Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites!" The Scribes were the experts in the interpretation of religious law; the Pharisees, in close alliance with them, were religious observers of law. At the height of confrontation Jesus told them they were like "whited sepulchres, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean" (Mt 23:27).

The stuff that went into the makeup of the Pharisees is still around—readily available! We have many in ourselves. "Then am that man?"

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AFP's golden parachute could reach ₱300M

[illegible] kind of at least P500 million that he could channel to priority areas of his choice.

"That's true. And I want it back to the field, "he told the location.

"The chief of staff was one if for the troops so he could [illegible] and no one has the right to question or even be surprised by his decision," the retired general said.

Abaya, who was named chief of staff on April 16, 2003, will retire on his birthday on Oct. 29. Gen. Efren Abu has been named to his replacement.

According to Brig. Gen. Edilberto Mamaga, AFP chief of personnel, a retiring four-star general receives more than P2 million in personnel benefits.

The "golden" system started in the 1990s but was curbed because of corruption allegations when President Macapagal-Arroyo implemented her so-called "revolving door policy" in the appointments of military chiefs, the latest of which forced generals out to their colonels from the Baguio Army and Navy told the bypass.

From March 2001 to April 2003, the AFP had a succession of four chiefs of staff who served a year of duty's ranging from a minimum of 60 days to a maximum of nine months.

Gen. Diomedio Villanueva announced the post on March 20, 2001, replacing Gen. Angelo Reyes who was named defense secretary. Villanueva was succeeded by Gen. Roy Cimatu, who served for eleven months. Gen. Benjamin Defensor, 60 days, and Gen. Dionisio Santiago, like three months.

Arrival bonus

One of the reforms pursued by said that at the height of the "revolving-door policy," was increasing chief of staff "and the gift is almost no arrival bonus."

The source said the chosen was hardly rewarded hand-someone and "nonsense." It amounted to "about P500 million," said the brigade-level colonel in Manhattan.

"When I saw them on television, I had a good laugh," he said in disgust.

A standard practice is called "ETC" (for "retire to duty"), which can only be done in cases with officers in charge of fund management, the source added said.

Ac'kio discretion

"All they do is send a notice that a division has been allocated P10 million, for instance. The order is, 'Please clear this.' So are done the check through corresponds and send the money back to [illegible] spousal beneficiaries," he said, adding:

"They cannot touch the middle-grade fund because that is dedicated money. They have hundreds to top other sources."

From the report of the Ridsdale Commission, which was formed to study the system of retirement benefits in the military last year, noted the possibility that the military finds might have tapped into the contingency fund for their personal use.

Garcia testimony

Ironically, the existence of the contingency fund was testified to by Rtd. Gen. Carlos Garcia before the Ridsdale Commission on Aug. 29, 2003.

Testifying on AFP corruption, Garcia said that in 2003, the military had P4.4 billion in centrally managed funds (CMF) from the P53.3 billion maintenance appropriations budget.

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"The CMF and partly-or wholly-

be treated as contingency funds (CF) by the commander and disbursed at his discretion to [illegible] effect requirements and functions or specifically included in the regular budget programs of the major service units," the Ridsdale Commission report said.

The CMF was organized in the report as saying the CMF-CF was advantageous to the military because it allowed the chief of staff the flexibility "to channel resources to priority areas."

"But in practice though, it is typically not possible to use the [CF] was used up to personal issues (e.g., cars, house and lot, etc.) or in the personal funds account of a commander," the Ridsdale Commission report said.

'Sharing your blessings is not a crime,' says AFP supplier

[illegible] orally talked to people from the Procurement Office, which determines the needs of the different military commands. In the case of the AFP, there are the S-4, G-4 and J-4 offices, she said.

The link is to find out beforehand which commands have budget allocations for specific needs, the supplier said.

"There is a process that has to be followed. If there is nothing, they will be asked about the requirements, the capabilities of your company will be looked into," she said.

A matter of timing

Negotiated contracts happen only if you are the exclusive distributor, specialty if the needs are urgent. For example, if there is a calamity, there are needs that have to be immediately addressed. If there is no specific allocation, that is where the so-called 'unrelated' comes in.

She says returning to the previous unsung officials of transacting check payments for supplies, one cash, some of which end up in their pockets.

What about the PR system, or the SOP? When does it come to play? Do you give it before or after the deal?

It's not a bribe

Rule one of the PR money is deep-rooted in the cultural stuff, according to the supplier.

If the contract is forwarded and approved at once by all the signatories, the PR money is still released, according to the supplier, to those "generously" those who give assistance in the past.

Mindanao Avenue resident Ramon Rodriguez is supplier subsidiaries, head for all computers or laptops" the supplier explained. "Pampagana" (oral) dahil sa ayaw nyo na ay tumulong sa gobyerno." (They do not ask for it, it is freely given to them by the supplier and, often, it is not asked upon as a bribe. It has become social practice because of the nature of transactions in the government).

The supplier does not mind treating the military staff in the procurement office to lunch. She defended such actions as just and part of the Filipino culture of "utang na loob" (debt of gratitude).

Camaraderie pays off

"Sometimes the signatory is not around, maybe he is in a conference. People left and right have to sign the papers and the supplier cannot find them. That is when camaraderie with the staff pays off," she said. "When the official arrives, they will make sure to open the papers. We look at PR money as goodwill. It is not a matter sure they don't ask for it."

It is like giving a birthday blowout, the supplier said.

Some of the contacts of this supplier were businessmen and captains in the Navy. Most of them are generals now, still active, but some had retired, she said.

The supplier said that companies do not

[illegible] marital law years, there was more red tape even when dealing with the AFP.

"Then, there was always money, the [illegible] more attractive. Now, especially because there are many companies in the AFP hours," she said. "If they said the funds were available, they would issue you a check at once."

"Now, you have many people to talk to. Your papers have to go through many hands and there is more red tape. They said that it is compulsory for the people to [illegible] suppliers, it only means that we [illegible] Malacañang."

Patience is virtue

Sometimes, she said, payment could take years.

"You really need patience in transactions with the government, especially in these recent years. It is so hard to collect. Even if the transaction has been completed, they keep saying there's still no money. But you remain patient. That's part of the business."

What about kick—how does it come into play?

The supplier recalled the only time when she began transacting business with the AFP Archer time, she was timidly unknown to the circle of officers connected with procurement.

One Sunday morning, lady luck favored her.

Holding hands with very lady

She was on a supermarket when she bumped into a general who had

lost papers pending on his desk.

She saw the general first. He was fiddling hands with a very sexy lady who looked like someone from the movies.

"What should I do? Should I let myself be seen by them or should I avoid them."

That was her dilemma, and the supplier about the incident that spelled the big difference in her career as military supplier.

"Sir, sir, I hope you don't mind. I saw that we would not [illegible] other in the next section of the supermarket," she said. "Then I went to him, 'Sir, how are you?' He turned pale. The girl crouched to him, like in another hotel what I said. 'Don't worry, sir, I won't. I didn't see anything,'" the supplier said, sensing the necessity.

The next day, the supplier was in the general's office.

Normally, she was the last of his callers to be entertained. Sometimes, she was told to come back the next day.

But that morning, she was the first to be allowed to see the general.

"There was no mention of the chance encounter in the supermarket.

All the general did was ask her if she needed her papers signed.

"Yes, sir, I hope so. I've been coming here for a month now" she recalled telling the general.

That same morning, the contract and her check were released.

"You didn't see anything?"

"Don't worry, sir, you secret is safe with me."

Since then, PR money involved in that deal could be the smallest percentage.

"We did not ask for anything," the supplier said. "But I did not forget. In gratitude, I bought him an expensive watch, the most expensive. It was a gift, not a bribe, to seal our friendship."

Pimentel warns GMA . . .

[illegible] Power, President Macapagal-Arroyo may be "ripe for another people power, or worse, a coup."

The warning was aired yesterday by Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr., who said he had received several information on the supposed Cha hand in the corruption case against Rep. Gen. Isidro Lacson.

"The land of America is here, and it is a coup and to Gloria this doesn't that things are not well between her administration and the military," Pimentel said in an interview with the Western Philippine Press held in Davao City where the Senate was holding a two-day strategic planning workshop.

"A weakened presidency is always ripe for the plucking," he said.

Pimentel's fears actually was for Mr. Arroyo to keep the presidency even to ensure that Garcia and whoever "plundered the money" of the soldiers were punished.

Trashing PDI

"That's about the only way she can get popular support to keep her in power. Since she has no support outside, she can get the support here," the senator said.

Pimentel's remarks on Friday about the alleged Cha connection, as reported somewhat in the Philippine Daily Inquirer by Ambassador Francis Ravindran to "mark his copy of the newspaper.

"I saw the headline. I didn't read it. I tossed [the Inquirer] aside. It didn't make sense to me," Ravindran said hours after attending ceremonies marking the 50th foundation anniversary of the Philippine Military Academy in Baguio City.

He added: "I cannot imagine how anyone can say a Cha connection. Our own view is that [the corruption scandal] is [not] tied to a war. Both the military and the civilians don't change. There are four century armies set of allegations coming out, and the AFP enclosing very responsibly, while great determination to do something about it.

"I believe that time [the Philippine government's response to corruption] to be real, and this country is going to reach its tipping point where you have [country breaking out. [The problem was] in collateral could be blame. I have confidence in this country."

Asked for comment on Pimentel's remarks, AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Narciso Abaya said "I have no news of any conspiracy theory."

It doesn't matter

Malacañang's position regarding Pimentel's remarks is that it didn't matter whose Cha connection or Garcia's face pointed wealth came from.

"What is important is what the government is doing to address the allegations, and it is very clear that the government is determined to unearth the truth, to punish those involved and clear the names of those who were not involved," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said in an interview with [illegible].

Bunye said the Arroyo administration was committed to pursue the case against Garcia and come up with a conclusion. He said Garcia's investigation were ongoing—by the Ombudsman, the House of Representatives and the military.

He also pointed out that it was Filipino journalist Jarvis Rondez who exposed the case of Garcia's [illegible] who after being fired from Swagman by Gil remains ambivalent for

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Magnolia downs Montaña in 2 OT

By Jasmine W. Payo

LOOKS like it would be another unpredictable conference as Magnolia ice Cream ousted two-time previous co-leads all the Montaña Jewels, 92-75, yesterday as the start of the PBL Open Championship at the Pasig Sports Center.

MORE SPORTS
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Arwind Santos delivered 15 points and 14 rebounds while RJ Rosada added 13 points for the Magnolia five, winners of the Unity Cup as Wes Mineral Water 9502 several months ago.

Earlier, Benito Otis Lorenzo crammed the favored Montaña Jewels, 63-52, with balanced scoring led by Aaron Aban and Dennis Dau.

"I told them that if we limit Montana to less than 60 points, we have a chance to win. We just let (Anthony) Washington score as their other players like (Chester) Tolentino and (Jay-R) Reyes won't be involved. It's hard to win by relying only on one player," said coach Louie Alas after scoring his first win against last conference's losing finalist.

Washington was the day's top shooter with 29 points.

Montaña could have swapped up the game earlier, but Aberin Arjonita split his freethrows 3.3 seconds remaining in the first overtime period.

Omar Cadi and Warren Shalim then recorded three-pointers as Magnolia finally seized control in the second overtime, 77-75.

Montaña threw the game into two time after Ismael Amin nailed a triple in the dying seconds.

Yancy Otis-Lorenzo opened the final quarter with a 12-4 rally for a 55-49 lead. But consecutive baskets from 6-foot-7 rookie Mark Sadaya gave them the biggest lead of the ballgame, 63-49.

The scores:

Magnolia

STEVEN STEVENSON 10—Aban 11, Dau 11, Arjona 9, Smith 9, Rosanda 8, Santos 6, Amores 6, Amante 2, Cruz 2, Ibo 1, Ibo 0, Reyes 0

MILLENIUM 10—Washington 29, Ignacio 7, Ocampo 6, Reyes 6, Santos 4, Samaniego 4, Ely 4, Ola, Mateo 2, Ordaz 0, Ibo 0, Reyes 0

Quarters: 17-17, 35-35, 49-49, 63-52, **Second Game**

DANCING provides entertaining number during the PBL opening ceremony

MASTER William Sison displays the bare-hand move for him a gold medal in the traditional weapons event of the recent World Traditional Wushu Festival in China.

RP wushu team pockets 5 golds

THE PHILIPPINE team made a smashing performance in the recent World Traditional Wushu Festival in Zhong Zhou City, Henan province, China, by winning 17 medals, including five golds.

Master Chort Loo of the Bong Bun Martial Arts Club led the RP charge by capturing two gold medals in the event which featured 2,000 athletes from more than 60 countries.

The other gold winners were Master William Sison of Lung Sum Athletic Club, Master Lou Mei Cheng of Mei Cheng Shaolin Kung Fu and the doubles team of Lester Pimentel and Richard Sily.

Sison, Cheng and Sily also bagged a silver medal each.

The other medalists were Thomas Pendel (two silvers), Rosey Ip (one silver and one bronze), Richard Sun (one silver and one bronze), Ana Tenjeo (two bronze), and Vincent Buenaventura and the duo Mae Agnes of Josephine Lim and Ma. Lourdes Chan, one bronze each.

Traditional wushu routine introduced thousands of years ago puts more emphasis on self-defense and fighting form, unlike today's wushu competition which is more sports-oriented.

More than 10,000 Shaolinwushu performed during the opening ceremony held at the Shaolin Temple, birthplace of Chinese martial arts.

Francis Chua, honorary president of the Wushu Federation of the Philippines, presented a theme on traditional wushu tea ceremony held during the festival.

RP delegation leader Alex Tiu Lan praised the RP team assigned mostly of masters from different local martial arts clubs for its remarkable showing.

Master Lo and Pimentel, a former world wushu champion, were the coach and captain, respectively of the team.

WHAT'S INSIDE

The WORLD

Cirilo Lorenzo M. Garcia

UK hostage pleads for life, begs London to leave Iraq

By Robert H. Reid

BAGHDAD—Trembling, haggard and weeping into a tissue, Margaret Hassan, the kidnapped British aid worker who has spent nearly half her life delivering food and medicine in Iraq, begged Britain to help save her by withdrawing its troops, saying these "might be my last hours."

HASSAN during appeal

The gaunt, 59-year-old woman's wrenching, televised statement Friday delivered between sobs—just now publicized—pours on Prime Minister Tony Blair's government, a day after it agreed to a US request to transfer 850 British soldiers from southern Iraq to the Baghdad area to free American forces for new offensives against insurgents.

"Please help me, please help me," Hassan, who heads CARE International's operations in Iraq, said in a grainy videotape broadcast by Al-Jazeera television. "Please help me. Please, please, please. Please help me. Please, please, I beg of you."

Iraqi extremists have taken military and civilian hostages in such hostage-taking performances, exploiting their agony to win concessions from their employers or governments, stir up opposition to US-led operations in the country and win recruits from within the Muslim world.

Gullible most previous hostage tapes, however, this one featured no hooded gunmen, no banners describing the militant group and no explicit demands for the captive's freedom. At times, the Qatar-based station said it received the tape Friday, but did not say when or how.

In an interview with Fox News, Iraqi Prime Minister Ayad Allawi called the Hassan kidnapping a "tragedy" but added: "Nobody is going to go for their demands... and going to their demands."

"We have to to remain very strong and adamant that we should bring the terrorists to justice," Allawi said.

Hassan, who is married to an Iraqi, was seized by gunmen Tuesday in eastern Baghdad on the route to work in her car. She appeared in the Friday tape wearing what appeared to be a robe or house dress. A tape released on the day of her abduction showed her wearing a white blouse with a round collar.

Evan E. Kohlmann, a terrorism expert in Washington, noted that Hassan was abducted after Britain and the United States refused to release women prisoners as demanded by Sydney's kidnappers.

Militants have kidnapped at least seven other foreigners over the past six months, and all were released. In September, Italian aid workers Simona Torretta and Simona Pari, both 29, were kidnapped from their Baghdad office; they were freed three weeks later. AP

Quicker US citizenship for foreign-born kids

BUFFALO, New York—Emma Scales, a 6-month-old girl who was born in Colombia, has been an American citizen since her adoptive parents brought her to New York last month.

Her without proof of citizenship, foreign-born children can receive things like Social Security cards or passports. The birth parents wouldn't even bring her to nearby Canada for fear that they would have trouble bringing her back to the United States.

"We would have been a little nervous," said Michelle Scales of Depew, near here.

But on Friday, Emma received her citizenship papers during a celebration of the Child Citizenship Act Project, launched in January to speed documents to children while eliminating paperwork for parents.

Although the 2000 Child Citizenship Act made all foreign-born children US citizens at the time of their adoption, parents still had to submit an application for citizenship documents and wait up to 24 months for it to be processed.

The new project substantially shortens citizenship processing to about 45 days of their arrival in the United States.

Americans adopted 21,616 children from other countries during the 12 months ending Sept. 30, 2003, government statistics show. The most foreign-born children came from China (6,962), followed by Russia (4,904), Guatemala (2,301), Mexico (1,713) and Ukraine (1,091).

The main department is now piecing rules to certify agencies specializing in foreign adoptions, required under a treaty signed by more than 130 countries. Countries agree to follow certain regulations on international adoptions, such as making sure the child to be adopted is an orphan or abandoned by parents, and that adults wishing to adopt have been checked out by their home countries.

IN THE KNOW

THE NEWS: Children adopted overseas now receive citizenship papers within 45 days of their arrival in America, rather than waiting up to 18 months.

WHY? Without proof of citizenship, foreign-born children cannot receive things like Social Security cards or passports.

QUOTE: "To those we've met all the criteria for these children on for citizens of the United States," Debbie Lagnese, who had to wait months for citizenship certificates for her children when she adopted them before the new program went into effect.

State department spokesperson Brian Bair has said all of the US rules needed under the treaty should be completed in 2005.

Since then 11,200 citizenships have been processed through the Child Citizenship Act Project's Buffalo headquarters so far this year.

Before, the process was long, insisted throughout the country by immigration activists and by consistent delivery of documentation," said Eduardo Aguirre, director of US Citizenship and Immigration Services, an absence of small new citizens dug into value after the ceremony. AP

6.8 Tokyo earthquake kills 2, injures 250

TOKYO—A strong earthquake measuring 6.8 on the Richter scale and a series of aftershocks hit the capital city and surrounding areas Saturday, killing at least two people, reports said.

At least 250 people were injured and several homes destroyed while a high-speed bullet train was derailed near the epicenter, some 200 km north of Tokyo, according to hospital officials and press reports.

Four people were unaccounted for near the epicenter of the quakes, in Niigata prefecture, as several houses were hit by landslides, a police spokesperson said.

Transport officials were on their way in two remote regions to have collapsed on the highway linking Nagaoka to the city of Niigata, a major port by the Sea of Japan (Tokyo Sea).

The first quake struck at 5:56 p.m. (0856 GMT), cracking buildings in Tokyo for several minutes.

A series of aftershocks followed, including four tremors visible two hours measuring 4.3 and 5.2, 5.9 and 5.9 on the Richter scale.

The focus of the first quake was located some 10-km underground, a relatively shallow depth given the large amount of damage officials said.

In nearby Ojiya, a 55-year-old man died after a massive blockade fell on him following the earthquake and broke his neck, said Isako Hamayama, an official at Uonuma Hospital in Ojiya.

"Some 30 others were injured, but their conditions were not so serious," he said.

In Tokamachi also near Ojiya, a man in his 30's was killed when a stone-cut wall smashed down on him, an official at Tokamachi Hospital said.

The people were seriously injured while some 40 others suffered minor injuries. The hospital is full of people—the injured and their families. It's a little chaotic," he said.

Nobody was injured in the train accident, rail operator JR East reported. AFP

North Korea threatens to double nukes

SEOUL—North Korea threatened on Saturday to double the size of its nuclear deterrent if the United States did not drop what Pyongyang sees as a cruel international policy aimed at unseating the communist leadership of Kim.

On Friday, North Korea set three conditions to be met before it would consider returning to six-party talks on its nuclear programs, including Washington ditching its "hostile policy."

The state newspaper in North Korea, the communist daily Rodong Sinmun, took this a step further on Saturday in a commentary published by the official KCNA news agency.

"If the US persistently pursues its unreformed hostile policy towards the DPRK from the viewpoint of exception, it will only compel the DPRC to double its deterrent force," the newspaper said. DPRK is short for the North's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

North Korea has already said it have many nuclear weapons it has and actually refers ambiguously to its "deterrent force." US officials say the North could have between two and eight weapons.

The commentary said the core issue was the US policy to overthrow the DPRK system. Washington wanted to ensure military influence in the region, even though the United States—unlike its regional partners—is a long way from North Korean soil.

"This is a main source of worsening and a trembling block in the way of settling the present situation," it said.

A senior state department official said Friday's North Korean statement was merely familiar rhetoric.

The official said the United States must also accept its proposal to discuss what is called "South Korea's nuclear problem" first, referring to tests mentioned in the South's scientists in the past that Seoul said had not been reported. Reuters

With 10 days to go, Bush, Kerry go on stump frenzy

PUEBLO, Colorado—The US presidential rivals stepped up the already manic pace of their campaign hunt from Saturday, just 10 days before the US election.

Democrat John Kerry was scheduled to woo Hispanic voters in the western states of Colorado and New Mexico later Saturday, then cross into three states for more appearances in the central state of Florida the following day.

President George W. Bush also faced a jammed schedule: five television talkfests in Florida Saturday, then a 1,140-km trip by train to spend the night at his ranch in Texas before stumping in New Mexico Sunday.

The chief candidates are locked in a desperate battle to win support in the 30 battleground states expected to decide the Nov. 2 election. His victory must be in the American 270 of the 270 Electoral College votes needed to win the presidency and a too-close-to-call race.

In Reno, Nevada, late Friday, Kerry accused Bush of trying to make the election about "junk consumer," national security, but added that he was ready to wrestle.

"Let's talk about what happened when you let Osama bin Laden escape in Afghanistan, let's talk about what happened when we had the world's number one terrorist cornered in the mountains of Tora Bora," he told a rally at the University of Nevada.

He said Bush outsourced the job of capturing Bin Laden out to Afghan warlords "who just one week earlier were fighting us."

"Now Osama bin Laden is taunting them while you have your 180 thousand. Division, the United States Marine Corps!"

Bush set the tone for Kerry in a new television advertisement Friday that Kerry's running mate John Edwards called "despicable."

A female narrator accuses Kerry of being dangerously weak on national security, while a pack of wolves—standing in for terrorists—prowl menacingly onscreen.

"And weakness attracts those who want to do America harm," the narrator says.

The Kerry campaign quickly fired back, calling the ad "desperate" and accusing Bush of using "the politics of fear to try and distract from President Bush's failed record on the economy and Iraq." "It won't work. His only reminds people that it's time for a fresh start and a new direction in America," spokesperson Chad Clanton said in a statement. AFP

KERRY (left) Linday during a talk at the University of Nevada Oct. 23. AFP

Kosovo goes to polls with Nato on standby

PRISTINA, Serbia and Montenegro—Kosovo began voting on Saturday for leaders likely to seek independence from Serbia at a UN-brokered talks that may be held next year.

About 1.4 million people are eligible to vote for a 120-seat assembly charged with meeting UN benchmarks on human rights and rule of law across all of the ethnic groups in Kosovo, whose majority is Albanian.

A review will then clear the way for talks on "final status" for the territory which is legally a province of Serbia.

Many voters are expected to choose between four main ethnic Albanian parties, all of which back demands for an independent state next year.

Kosovo has been a UN protectorate since three months of Nato bombing in 1999 drove out Serb forces to end what the West said were their ruthless bid to crush a guerrilla insurgency.

Polls in the general election—Kosovo's second since becoming a protectorate—will close at 6pm, and preliminary unofficial results are expected later on Saturday.

The impoverished province of 2 million voters heavily on European Union and United States aid. Unemployment is more than 50 percent.

The 90-person multiethnic assembly's composition will decide the election and is widely expected to back moderates such as veteran president Ibrahim Rugova, who like his main rivals is running on a pro-independence platform.

"The future of Kosovo is at stake and I trust that each and every voter will... assume their responsibilities," said UN governor Soren Jessen-Petersen.

They will be choosing "the assembly and the government which will be responsible for leading the implementation of those standards that are absolutely essential to build a multi-ethnic Kosovo and the path to which we take place in summer 2005," he said.

But the success of the multi-ethnic democratic experiments also relies on the participation of the Serb minority who have been urged by both nationalist leaders and the politically timid Serbian Orthodox Church to boycott the ballot.

The Serbs, who oppose independence, are reluctant to legitimize the process. They say Albanian mob violence against them last March proved they need greater guarantees of security and representation.

Fourteen people were killed and hundreds of homes torched in the riots as mobs attacked Serb enclaves. A confidential report to the United Nations later said addressing Albanian aspirations would no longer be avoided.

Further delay in ending Kosovo's political and economic limbo by opening talks on its final status sometime next year could break the patience of a majority that has been waiting for its own state since 1999.

Ethnic minorities in Kosovo are expected to boycott the election, followed by 2,000 for the election period for fear of a repeat of the March riots, which caught the United Nations and the peacekeepers off guard. Reuters

Sikh boys challenge turban ban

CERGY, France—A French court examining an appeal from three Sikh youths suspended from classes for wearing an under-turban on Friday ordered the school authorities to hold a disciplinary hearing so they can formally state their case.

Lawyers for the teenagers had asked the administrative court in the Paris suburb of Cergy for a ruling whether the under-turban—known as a keski—contravenes a new French law banning religious symbols in state schools.

Instead it gave the headmaster of a secondary school in Bobigny 15 days in which to hold a disciplinary hearing.

The refusal to allow the boys into classes without giving them the chance to argue their case before a disciplinary hearing was "a serious and manifestly illegal breach of the right to a defense," the court said.

The ruling means there was no clear decision yet on the legality of the keski, for which members of France's 7,000 strong Sikh community had been hoping.

Tuesday's hearing was the first time France's "secularity" law had come before the courts. Designed to preserve the separation of religion and state, it bans the wearing of all "conspicuous" religious insignia in the classrooms.

Primarily aimed at the growing number of Muslim girls wearing the headscarf, the law also banned Christian crosses and Jewish skullcaps. The Sikh turban was prescribed, even though the government maintained it had not even considered the Sikh community when the law was being drawn up.

In the Sikh religion males are required to let their hair grow uncut and all wear turbans.

The three Sikh boys have been consigned to a separate study room since the start of the academic year while a period of "dialogue" appointed by the law has been conducted with the school authorities.

At the hearing lawyers asked for them to be fully reintegrated into the school or—failing that—for a disciplinary board to formally expel them. AFP

Castro: I'm in control

HAVANA—President Fidel Castro told his countrymen in a letter published on Friday that he remained fully in command of Cuba, even while undergoing surgery to rebuild his knee destroyed in a fall.

The Cuban leader refused tranquilizers and general anesthetic during a three-hour surgery to rebuild his broken left left kneecap. He told doctors only to apply anesthetic from the waist down, so he would "be able to attend many important matters," during the procedure.

"Since the moment I fell, I have not stopped attending to the important tasks that I (as responsible for, in coordination with the other comrades," Castro wrote in a letter printed on the front page of Granma, the ruling Communist Party newspaper.

Castro, 78, tripped on a step and fell to the ground after a speech on Wednesday night in central Cuba, breaking the bone in right elbow and suffering a further fracture in the right arm.

He spoke edited for a microphone to reassure the stunned crowd and Cubans who saw the middle-level administration he was "taken" and could continue governing in relative calm.

The fall was shown repeatedly on El Informativo nonstop, but brought him no get well wishes from the Bush administration. Bryant

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Cariaso back with Aces against Beermen today

PUNTOCODE: Ray Evangelista has nobody to pass to as Sta. Lucia's Norman Gonzalez harasses him during their game Saturday night. Panabaki man, 69-67.

By Jane Manuera

DON'T be surprised to see Jeffrey Cariaso and Paynet Hugnatan wearing an Alaska jersey when the Aces battle the San Miguel Beermen today in the Coca Masaba PBA Philippine Cup at the Araneta Coliseum.

Cariaso and Hugnatan were traded along with the Coca-Cola Tigers' No. 1 draft pick for 2005 to Alaska yesterday in exchange for slotman Eli Ildefonso and outside gunner John Ong.

The team coach Tim Cone has also let both Cariaso and Hugnatan know that they will be given a fair chance to prove themselves in the Aces' system.

Cariaso said Hugnatan was excited about the trade because he will be playing for his hometown team.

Hugnatan is a native of Iligan City while Cariaso is from Cagayan de Oro.

"We were also told that we will be given a chance to play and not just sit on the bench," said Cariaso.

Cariaso and Hugnatan were informed of the trade by Cone after the Tigers' practice session at the Ateneo de Manila University gym in Loyola Heights.

"We were surprised when coach told us that we were traded," said Cariaso.

Cariaso and Hugnatan were scheduled to report to the Aces' practice at the Ynares Center in Antipolo City last night.

Cariaso is expected to see action in the Aces' lineup when they battle the Beermen today at the Big Dome.

Cariaso, a 6-foot-3 forward, was drafted by Coca-Cola in the 2003 rookie draft.

Hugnatan, a 6-foot-5 forward, was drafted by Coca-Cola in the 2004 rookie draft.

Cariaso averaged 3.1 points and 2.1 rebounds in 10.1 minutes of playing time in 14 games for the Tigers.

Hugnatan averaged 1.3 points and 1.1 rebounds in 5.1 minutes of playing time in 11 games for the Tigers.

Ildefonso averaged 3.1 points and 2.1 rebounds in 10.1 minutes of playing time in 14 games for the Aces.

Ong averaged 1.3 points and 1.1 rebounds in 5.1 minutes of playing time in 11 games for the Aces.

Eala dares Taulava to face DOJ charges

By Jasmine Payo

THE PHILIPPINE Basketball Association (PBA) challenged Asi Taulava to face the charges of the Department of Justice regarding his allegedly involvement of dragging the league into a full-blown legal battle.

PBA Commissioner Noli Eala said that while Taulava has the right to file a court case, the Talk N' Text center should have first refuted the DOJ findings, which found him guilty of falsifying his citizenship papers along with five other foreign-born players.

"We (Taulava) should stop hiding from legalities and directly answer the charges of the DOJ," said Eala a day after Taulava filed a P1.2-million damages suit against the league before the Quezon City Regional Trial Court.

Attorneys Hap and Mick Peraut, and also filed a petition for prohibition with prayer for injunction and temporary restraining order at the Pasig Regional Trial Court.

Lawyers Ed Fadullon and Alexander Lawson said that the legal move will "hopefully prevent the DOJ in implementing its resolution to cancel their certificates of recognition of their citizenship" and "stop the Bureau of Immigration's deportation proceedings".

The hearing for Hap and Peraut's petition is set tomorrow.

Taulava's lawyers had also sought a court injunction to restrain the PBA to allow him to suit up against the Phone Pals.

"We are ready to face him in court. In fact, I'm trying to finish a proposal to the board (stating) on what the league would do with players who go to court," said Eala.

The PBA board has set an emergency board meeting on Wednesday to further study the implications of the DOJ deportation order on Bad Boy's Dwayne Rrop, Mick Pennisi and John Ellis, Rudy Hatfield of Coca-Cola and Gambler's Asi Taulava.

Barbers slams Asi for filing case

THE CHAIR of the Senate committee that initially declared Asi Taulava a fake Filipino last year lauded the Talk N' Text center yesterday for filing "a lawsuit against Filipinos who were just trying to follow the rule of law as endorsed by the Department of Justice."

Senator Sen. Robert Z. Barbers was reacting to a P1.2 million damage suit Taulava filed Thursday against PBA chief Rudolf Eala and Barbers, adding that a supposed Foreigner is now making a mockery of the law by doubting and questioning "the wisdom of our country's legal system."

Barbers said the PBA should be commended instead for showing "its determination to resolve and rectify possible lapses in certain procedures in their registration that opens the avenue for foreigners, with supposed Filipino roots, to be able to play in the country's premier professional league."

He added that the action taken by Taulava deserves questionable legality and should be condemned by the league.

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Django zooms ahead

₱657M RICHER
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WORLD CUP CHAMPS: Sonia P. Magnanimous, Petron sports managing director and engineer Gilbert V. Gordon, Propet Sports general manager Armand Ong (middle) as Chevron King and Liza del Rosario after the two bowlers topped the World Cup national finals Wednesday as Ramey's Restaurant Bowl. King and del Rosario will represent the Philippines in the International Bowl set Dec. 3-12 at the SMP Bowl in Tebet Bowl, Singapore.

Show biz programs and the battle for No. 1

"THE BUZZ" was aired last Sunday.

I don't say the whole show was, but neither do I say this was the only time it has been. Having been away from the table for a time, I may have misunderstood some shining examples.

I just know that I ended up writing Sunday.

The show had this hyper voiceover that accompanied itself with what I can only call multiple lovey-laughter. The kind that thinks it has scored after humiliating someone. The kind that comes with scenes for sunglasses and the jugular.

That is not, this is not just play time, this is not fun, this is kill time.

(And if that voice belongs to Johnlapus, I cry at the thought of this man's huge talents being shunted to this fashion by his own network.)

The voiceover was pushing that thing which, once or two times, we should only be whispering about — and following up with a sign of the cross so that Satan doesn't come screaming!

It was guffawing over the flak in a young actor's middle. Defending a young actress' right to be "sexy." Describing about the English of the stars.

(Jaya thinking: Why and how and when did the show go so low?

Aaaa, can the scorers, a young moderator's capital to his body, and having one's self to be right of personal discipline—but I ask: Who gave these guys the right to censure on that and grind it like some beast to a prey? They might sometimes not a part of the almost superhuman decisions of cinema on the human body, no, but to demand the boy be this way?

Pray: Can you guys even pass a flak test yourselves?

Sure, long hair on a girl's armpit is not the currently accepted success—but what gods are they to shame someone in the cosmos? How would they feel if they were that girl's brother? Sigh. Think ourselves.

Think too: Are you really such sportsmen of beauty and grooming pointers?

And sure, getting their English right is a plus for any star—but what terms of distress and whom are they that would guarantee to liquidate others for every misstep? Kiss ochered can anyone get to escape when to say "get back to the volcano" is to court world censure?

And assure this: If you guys were freaking, will you actually pass a basic English grammar and diction test? Or will all the educated dukes in this country have a serious dissent at your expense?

Cheapest level

"The Buzz" was shooting for the stars since there were insecurities in their ratings. Which is why it, which only means that the show was pinning down the rawest and lowest form of its audience to the cheapest level.

And that being the show that proves that its network wants as No. 1 in entertainment, we can only bring in how many people—millions should be a good number—then more new faces to little dark faces from wherever they go in the country.

So, in a terrible mix-up of good and bad, the program's ratings will actually tend on this end keep going upward up.

Add this to the final blow: The show seems to score breathtaking only stars belonging to "the other" channel!

Testing Kris

After wincing, I stewed. I ended up texting Kris Aquino: were while she was still on the air.

Why Kris? Simply because I'm always liked this girl. Through all her scandals and bad judgments, she's never struck me as mean-spirited or ugly or ugly. She, she lashes out even from the unfair advantage of TV, but that for she's done in front blind fury and not premeditated venom.

So I couldn't for the life of me understand why "The Buzz" wasn't picking up. Sans her kind of spirit. She is the show's crowd-drawer, after all!

Kris texted back (and I'm sorry I failed to get her permission to use this): "Funny ha. But do Ann as a weekly? But "full" subjects to me to humiliation and lol. Will forward your text to Atty Dinggoan. The Buzz' supervising producer."

And she is right.

DIALA Ann she any same thing!

It will as constantly present as a talk-session from "the other" station but will zealously "protect" its cows to death.

It will leave its stars untouched, even if a controversy does garnished a bit of outrage. Because, well, it can get those numbers just as easily by "testing" the other channel's contract kids, releasing blind items suggesting their immorality, or fanning as flames in their marriages.

There is another show is apparently. Over to teasers. It is the mother of entertainment!

Descent to No. 1

GMA 7's "StarStruk" does to Kiko and saves ABS-CBN's talents what ABS-CBN's "The Buzz" does to GMA 7 talents.

It has almost become a question of who is doing it to more talents more often more crassly.

And everything comes down to these two networks' drag-down fight to be No. 1!

Question is: is this what it means to be No. 1?

To be the most murderous and the most vicious? To make entertainment a killing field? To say into everyone's lowest common denominator?

Both stations forget that they are still in every way part of the broadcast industry, which is belong to the media profession, which is into faith under basic journalistic rules.

Because of which it follows:

Where is the fairness in steering down a new stark sense of self becomes of fault to the people? And only because the people's belong to the conquering nation and, even there may be too small a size to get for network reward?

That's another thing. It's the small town that got it every time.

Judy Ann Santos will not get it, on alone because she is star, but because her manager is feared. Claudine Barretto will not get it, not even because she doesn't deserve it, but because her handler is powerful.

They're big; they're safe.

Now, big stars like Kris and Donna will get it because, but that's because these two are magnets for public love or public hate. Because is sufficient to those two! But they will not get it all the time because they

At THE frontline of the network war is always the show-biz talk shows: Ray Alcorda and Kris Aquino (above) in "The Buzz" and Lolit Solis and Boy Abunda in "StarStruk." PHOTOS COURTESY OF NETWORKS

have the means to fight back: They have big backs; they have strong managers; they have their networks' backing.

So we're back to the networks. For in the end, it is they that determine whether their entertainment programs will go to one direction or another.

One means done can do it—or undo it.

But I guess if the promised cross-fire brings in the numbers, dramas are well simply be winning through many more Sundays. Bring No. 2—whether hurting it or hurting it to never look—to the god before which all talk of "service" to nation and country flee.

And entertainment is always contaminated in every network war to be No. 1!

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OPINION

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Debt relief 1

THE 11 senior economists from the University of the Philippines School of Economics did the country a signal service when they issued their now famous paper on the deepening fiscal crisis. But their analysis of the "real score on deficits and the public debt" is relatively silent on a crucial question: debt relief.

EDITORIAL

Like the classic Sherlock Holmes tale, the UP 11 paper is remarkable because of the dog who did not bark. In their analysis, the economists note that current national government spending is at its lowest in a decade, "net of interest payments." In other words, if we remove interest payments for both local and foreign debt from the equation, government spending is actually smaller now than it was two administrations ago.

The growing public debt, then, is part of the problem; it may in fact be the root of it. Consider, for instance, the fact that the national government budget cannot fund all our development needs. Much of it goes to salaries, maintenance and operating expenses, local governments—and debt service. With very little left to spare, the budget cannot possibly provide the economy what it needs. And yet it is a budget we cannot even afford; we have to borrow even more money to pay for it (hence the deficit).

But the option of debt relief (the telltale dog in the debt narrative) is not discussed in the UP 11 paper. "But why does the UPSE step so gingerly around the public debt issue? Could it be because about 80 percent of the total debt is owed to foreign creditors, and dealing seriously with it still means having to confront those lenders?" ask UP sociologist Walden Bello and Lidy Nacpil and Ana Marie Mesterova of the Freedom from Debt Coalition.

To be sure, the widely circulated critique from Bello and the FDC is less than completely intellectually honest. It tries to have it both ways, chiding the UP 11 for "ideological bias" and then later attacking them for lacking "intellectual courage"—essentially, for failing to transcend that same bias. Now, someone who does not offer a particular solution because he has defined the problem differently may be accused of many things, but by definition intellectual cowardice cannot be one of them.

On the matter of "managing" the growing public debt, however, their criticism is to the point. "It is testimony to how full debt repayment according to the terms dictated by our creditors has become a sacred cow that the UPSE paper fails to even suggest (or) mention the possibility of managing it rationally."

This same sacred cow, more and more Filipinos are beginning to realize, has taken over the middle of the road, blocking all progress. The result, in the technical language Bello and the FDC employ: "Along with the structural adjustment measures imposed under the guidance of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, the strategy of reducing debt repayment the national priority—which has been followed by every administration since Marcos—has created a condition of structural stagnation. . . "

How do we coax the sacred cow to move and get out of the way?

Perhaps the time has come to reconsider debt relief.

We do not suggest outright repudiation, although some debts, such as the war incurred at grossly disadvantageous terms to fund the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant, qualify for it. We do not suggest a debt moratorium either; it is critical to collaborate with every single creditor.

What we do suggest is debt renegotiation, starting with the debts incurred by the Marcos regime.

Taming North Korea

FOREIGN COMMENT

THE RISE THAT has marred a rare attempt at helping promote human rights and freedom in North Korea.

The enactment of the law serves as a new message urging North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il to improve his country's miserable record human rights. The law also will lend support to Japan in its effort to resolve the case of a Japanese kidnapped to North Korea.

North Korea should be made to realize that it will be unable to improve relations with the rest of the world unless it first resolves the abduction controversy and the issue of its nuclear programs.

The new US legislation seeks to ensure that North Korea will respect and defend basic human rights, solve problems arising from North Koreans escaping from their country, and improve the transparency in the handling of humanitarian aid in that nation.

It has become common to see North Korean escapees seek asylum in foreign embassies. Given its severity, the international community cannot but consider this problem. China and Russia—both home to North Korean refugees—should grapple with the problem through discussions with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

Yomiuri Shimbun (Tokyo)

Chief Justice Enrique M. Fernando

SEPARATE OPINION

Augusto A. Cruz

I HAD abandoned my chosen profession of law to enter the political arena in 1969 when I received the shocking news of the death of former Chief Justice Enrique M. Fernando last week at age 89. He was one of the three student members of the Supreme Court, which he headed from 1979 until his retirement in 1985. In accompanying Fernando and a number of the leaders of the democratic exile before, he impaired that image when he sided with Ferdinand Marcos during martial law and, as he put it, "legitimized" the dictator's debates. Many of his admirers, including me, were disappointed and felt betrayed.

Until his confinement in the hospital this year, he often visited the high tribunal and attended its programs and functions. He was proud to see that many of its members were his students in the UP College of Law during his early years as a professor, along with Antonio Padilla, Vicente Abad Santos, and Ramon Aquino. His residence on the Court during his time included Teodoro Padilla, Florentino Feliciano, Hugo Gutierrez, Marcelo Fernan, Florenz Regalado, Camilo O. Quiason, and others.

I was one of them, in his class in Political Law in the first year. As I wantingly told [illegible] years later in the premises of his wife Emma, I did not like him as a teacher. The reason he was then obsessed with his future bride, who was then in the senior year. When leaving to sit, the young professor often lost his train of thought every time his lady-to-be passed by in the corridor. The couple seated at the mezzanine because it was true. Despite his shortcomings, and mine, he gave me a grade of 1, which was respectable enough for me.

When I was in the Court, he often visited me for a few minutes of conversation. I thought earlier that he must have some request or suggestion to make in connection with some case, but I learned later that all he intended was a short social visit. I think he was that way with the other justices he had taught in college. Since he invited Teddy Padilla and me last were threatened to lunch at a Japanese restaurant and we had an amusing time discussing not just our current political issues.

I will have to say now that when I was the dean of the Ateneo School of Law, Interior Secretary, our president, assumed me call about the possible appointment of Fernando to the bench. I objected because of his earlier ministerial manner in the classroom and presidential that less moderate the current, not UP) would present and strike. I thought that was the end of the matter but was surprised later to learn that Tovey had appointed him just the same without my previous knowledge and consent. I resigned. Fernando knew about this but was too much a gentleman not to accept my resignation nor to take over his chair when the students struck as I had feared.

Being, as his friends called him, specialized in Constitutional Law in the teaching and practice, he was most knowledgeable that many historian lawyers in their own jurisprudence on the subject and could quote from memory cautious Holmes, Cardozo, Brandeis, and other eminent jurists, as well as our own Justice Laurel, for whom he had a special admiration. He co-authored a book on the Constitution with another esteemed colleague, Lorenzo M. Tañada. He was executive member of the Civil Liberties Union, together with Jose W. Diokno, Dean Sinco, and other libertarians. Except for his honorable deflection in support of the despot during the martial law era, he was prominent in the defense of human rights.

In my book, "Ten Greats," I made some uncomplimentary remarks about his disappointing television, even serious justifications, of the martial law regime. I quoted a unnerving opinion of his on Interior Secretary Ramon Administration of Marcos in which he praised "the impressive performance of the President and the Free Lady in forgiving the pauperized life of the Filipinos, rousing our valued virtues and traditions, and enhancing the dignity of the nation." Many people, especially his students, were perplexed by his wise that. His adversary of republicanism and individual liberty had on his record towards justice as dean.

He for all my open disapproval of his role, proud of the discredited Marcos regime, befriended me throughout my many years of exile in the United States. I remember him as a man of high learning, unassuming and dedicated to freedom of expression, which he regarded as an article of faith.

Fernando was first and foremost a consummate academician. He graduated magna cum laude and introduced me from the UP College of Law and earned his master's degree in law at the first Yale degree teaching before he was conferred the degree of Doctor of Laws, how ever many, by the Ateneo Escolar University and the university in South Korea. He truly deserved to be acknowledged as an outstanding jurist and expert scholar of the Law.

Enrique M. Fernando had his imperfections, like all of us, especially when he strayed from the path of freedom during the Marcos martial law. But he was a cherished friend for all that frailty, and I deeply grieve over his passing.

Not what you think

MOMENTS

By Jerry M.
Cebuc, SVD

SOMEONE once told me that if a man is hurt on the forehead, he is thinking man; if a man is hurt on the crown, he is very man; if a man is hurt on the forehead, just on the crown of his head, he thinks he's a very man!

* * *

In today's Gospel (Lk. 18, 9-14), Jesus expresses those who think of themselves as more righteous or better than others. Unworthy is the key word if we are humble, we will really are. Humility is the best starting point. With humility we can't go wrong, for "whoever makes himself out to be great will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be raised." In fact, a lot of our relationship problems can be solved if we learn humility, honesty and respect, and we make God, rather than ourselves, the standard.

* * *

Some people are good, as does good, but they are not humble. They think and make decisions before they are good, then they make others know how good they are. They even, perhaps, consciously or unconsciously believe that they do deserve God's love because of their goodness. Wrong. Wrong. Wrong. Such people would do well to remember that all of us are sinners, being good is not a matter, more of us deserves God's love.

* * *

It's the expression "no goodness!" It is a beautiful expression that conveys goodness in our hearts comes from God. It is a sharing in goodness. It is an acceptance that our goodness is not just our achievements but God's goodness shining through us. There is nothing to boast about, but there is a lot to praise God for wherever we are good and whatever we do good.

* * *

When I look back, I remember people who were disciplined, diligent, hardworking and people and nations. And the thing is they get away with that! They can manipulate and fool our people minutes and the big to misrepresented. It is really disgusting that we fear, are scared and manipulate the lives of so many in our land.

* * *

Just now, I paused for a moment of prayer. I just realized that I myself may have taken this phenomenon position when I criticized the grey-minded lay helpers in our parishes and the deceiving politicians in our midst. But there is a difference: A Pharisee criticizes others to uplift himself, while a prophet criticizes others to uplift the truth. Where are you in these options? Is it for yourself or is it for God and the church?

* * *

Next week, especially on All Soul's Day, we are reminded by the Church about death and eternal life. The lesson line is not what we think, and not what others think, but what God thinks we are. We can fool others, we can fool even ourselves, but, we can never fool God. The best prayer, the best starting point for any prayer is "Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner." Take the road of humility and you're on the right road.

* * *

Congratulations to the Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres, who are celebrating their 100th year in the Philippines. There will be a Thanksgiving Mass at the Manila Cathedral on Oct. 25, 4 p.m., to be officiated by Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales. They will also have a gala night presentation of "Women with a Heart," written and directed by Fr. James Reuter, S.J. at the Fleur de Lis Auditorium at the St. Paul University Manila on the same day. Please contact 524-1607.

* * *

A sentence with the Lord:

Lord, remind me that what matters most is not what I think, what others think, but what you think of me. Amen.

Abu and Aglipay

REVELLE

Raimundo J. Farolan

As you read this column, this is to inform for a private meeting at the Intramuros area presidents Emilio Bamberg Aguinaldo (MP) Mr. Hamman as Fair Lasanianism), home of the 6th Army Command and General Staff School then belong to the class of 1903, MP is the second generation of their class to become president of the nation. The first was their brigade, president of Samoan. This conference station. Also a possible future addressed to Mahindra.

With Abu's move to Camp Aguinaldo, Maj. Gen. Emerson Senga, Southern chief, is tipped to be the new Army commander. Senga is also a member of Class 1972.

* * *

Perhaps, this is the proper time to mention once again the issue concerning a Reid term of office for the MP chief. General Ano will be retiring on June 16, 2005 barely eight months from now. As mentioned in last month's column, we had five MP chiefs in the short span of roughly three years—Villamoria, Clinton, Defensor, Santiago, Abaya...and this situation created disadvantageous for the Armed Forces. If the lonely passengers exist has a short term of three years, surely the AFP chief and the major service commanders deserve much more.

The same holds true for the Philippine National Police leadership. The current General Aglipay Aglipay was recently appointed PNP chief and his term was extended for a period of six months. What can we possibly expect him to accomplish in the remaining Aglipay is virtually nothing about his nomination by Cristiano Aquino, Cayayan and going into farming in the meantime, its nefarious police reforms that, given the circumstances, seem to going to take him seriously? He is not going to rock the boat or challenge the status quo or make new enemies just as he is about to step down from office, and the people know well his inconsistency (before a leader who focus on his duty) and.

The point of mutual choice cannot be played by the AFP or the PNP. Too much is at stake. What is needed is strong and stable leadership capable of cracking the whip to keep people in line.

* * *

Gen. Narciso Abaya seems me a long lesser extension, among other things, why he had to move his house to the side of Mrs. Imi. Cardinal Garcia was hogging the headlines of the local papers. We said that his trip to attend the 7th Chief of Defense (13-NDU) conference was an international conference held on opportunity to discuss with those consequence issues of concerns concerns, especially terrorism. But "the target mass important activity in the conference was my Hilarious meeting on a "one-on-one with Gen. Abaya at Pentagon on US Pacific Commander's (PACOM)." Means said that "the US was particularly concerned with the case involving Mindanao Group. On December 18 of the year 2003, US PACOM Commander Admiral Thomas Fargo met with Philippine Armed Forces Chief of Defense Generalissimo of the AFP-US Mutual Defense Treaty."

Which makes me wonder. Abaya smelled that his first bidding of trouble came last February when he received information coming from US sources about certain violations by Gen. Garcia sons. Would it not have been more prudent to relieve Garcia of all his duties while conducting an investigation instead of bringing him to, of all places, 6/6 (Press and Freedom) to witness the dealing with the Abu? Here is a follow-up question raised by Rep. Allen Peter Cayetano during the recent House hearings. Why assign an officer who is under investigation for serious offenses to another position in the light of the recently televised interviewing the activities of family members?

* * *

WHAT if you had a chance to find the answer to "what might have been" ? What if a stranger whom you met on a train or bus suddenly became quizable—her wife, and with whom you have fallen in love, walks back into your life who you want after, and you have a chance to see to be the ending? Would you take the chance or opt for the status quo?

These are the tantalizing possibilities held out by the movie "Before Sunset," the sequel to "Before Sunrise," which tells the story of the two lovers, Jesse (Ethan Hawke) and Celine (Julie Delpy) spend together in Vienna, falling in love and parting, promising to meet each other in the same city six months hence.

Almost a decade later, Jesse is in Paris, promoting his book which is a fictionalized account of his day with Celine, when he spots her at the back of a bookshop. Like the movie before it, "Before Sunset" is a testament lived by the characters' actions/deeds. Jesse is flying out that same evening. And he is about to leave behind his current shitty marriage and his departure, they must sort out the past nine years and what had happened in their lives in the interim.

There is little to the plot of this simple movie, and, thank heavens, a minimum of plot devices, but there is an abundance of dialogue. And it's about the most natural I've heard in the movies in years. Painstaking to have the characters trimmed big themself—the two stars wrote and left an unexposed rhythm, flowing from the present to the profound, with little accommodations or preparations. It's like listening in on a private conversation that you're not supposed to hear. It's a very intimate movie. It also helps that the two stars are as good looking as Hawke and Delpy.

Possible alibis for unexplained wealth

A TOKTAHAN has already for the lawyers of bodyguard Army Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia.

There seems to be no charges in the Office of the Ombudsman, and I don't see it appeals in connection with his unexplained wealth. A court-martial will soon be convened by the brass/bosses of the Philippines to determine his liability under the articles of war for the same offense.

Depending on the evidence presented in the court-martial investigation, the Ombudsman may file a case of plunder against him and more than dismissal we have had for the dismissal of the trial. She deposed Ombudsman Joseph Estrada.

Garcia's legal troubles are not confined to the Philippines. The properties in the United States that he and his family allegedly own have been impounded by the US government pending completion of the forfeiture proceedings. It was the money used to buy them came from lawful sources.

If the money that Garcia had earlier brought into the United States was gained in some criminal or tax evasion and dealings, legal technicians—not even American citizens—that they could lose their ownership due to these legal violations. Even the properties in the name of members of Garcia's given card clearly after his questionable bank accounts and real estate holdings were exposed could be patents of things to come for them.

Worse, they can be included in the criminal charges as accomplices if they knowingly or even that their properties in Garcia's name were bought with money violations to help in the acquisition of the bank deposits and properties in question.

Presumption

In the matter, Garcia's defense is his innocence's "presumption of guilt." Under the Unexplained Wealth Law (as Republic Act 1379), where a public officer or employee has acquired during his incumbency an amount of property which is manifestly out of proportion to his salary as public officer or employee and his other income and the income from legitimate acquired property, the said property shall be presumed to have been unlawfully acquired.

But such presumption is conditional or temporary. Thus, in Garcia's case, if he is able to prove that he acquired the properties in question through legitimate means, then the presumption that they were illegally acquired will be set aside.

On the other hand, if he fails to show he has those properties were acquired through lawful means, the imposition of the guilty becomes conclusive. And all he proves in the behalf is just an chamber for guns, while the brain of his, it may still be confiscated by the government.

The application of the "presumption of guilt" in Garcia's case is unavoidable. As a major general, he receives a monthly salary of P83,000, less the usual deductions. His total thousands of names and properties does not show that he and other members of his family have other legitimate sources of income that can account for his (or bank accounts, real holdings in the Philippines and the United States, and the thousands of dollars that his wife and children have brought out for United States in past trips.

The burden of overturning this presumption is not going to be easy. Garcia's lawyers have to come up with credible sources for the money that he and his family used. Just the illegal rise of his net worth in the light of his pension compensation.

Alibis

The defenses that Garcia may resort are: inheritance from his or her spouse's relatives, winning the sweepstakes, successful family businesses, payments or donations from relatives and friends.

While these sources look plausible, proving their truthfulness is difficult. All these definitely have paper trails that can be verified through probate or private documents.

In the inheritance defense, the name of the person or late will and statement of the dead relative and or his or her properties have to be produced and proven authentic. These documents can be counterchecked with the signatures in the statements of the family that made the inheritance or donation, via their income society of such, the names of families with "rich money" or those of their precedents are of public knowledge.

With regard to winning the sweepstakes and profitable business ventures, the validations can be done through official documents, such as, income tax returns, financial statements and audited financial reports.

There's a new though in presenting these defenses: if the documents do not contain accurate information or the right taxes were not paid for the inheritance or donation, or the profits earned, expect the Bureau of Internal Revenue to go after the persons involved in the assessments for unpaid taxes.

In an earlier statement, Garcia said the "loans and donations" in an effort to explain the source of the thousands of dollars that his net was not simply bringing into the United States. If he wants to maximize this defense, he better be ready to disclose the identity of his generous relatives and friends.

Equally guilty

There is no way any judge will allow the names of these benefactors to be kept under wraps and at the same time give credence to Garcia's self-serving claim that these dollars were from relatives.

And when these relatives and friends are identified and compelled to confirm their action, they should be forewarned of the adverse consequences of not being able to prove that they have the financial resources. Silly backed by income tax returns, refusal or failure of Garcia to do dollars is ignorance.

If they fail to prove their economics, they may find themselves facing perjury charges or, worse, included in the charges above as accessories to the crimes that Garcia is being investigated.

In case these defenses fail, Garcia can fall back on his last card: illegal gaining. Why pick on her when other military top brass, senators, congressmen, Cabinet members and local officials have by bank accounts and economic property holdings in the Philippines and the United States?

It's the classic "he him who is without sin casts the first stone" arguments that corrupt public officials like to invoke in defense of their actions or when, in the privacy of their rooms, their conscience tug them about their ill-gotten awards.

It will take some time before the cases against Garcia can be resolved with finality. In the meantime, his name has achieved a peculiar notoriety in the reverse, it is not the wrong, but for those will surely like it.

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Margie's back

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

Neither, it seems, are they worried about the possibility that the second "depression" on the cover could turn off readers or that a book about depression could be depressing. Against that possibility, I am trusting in Margie's power to lure wide-format and anticipation her writing and her interviewees' and interviewers' reputations.

"Like love, depression has been trivialized," she declares, stressing that her new book will not be an expose which her memoirs has earlier been "Kabisera" (Capital) and "Kabisera" and debilitating condition that affects one's professionalism and relationships, and leaves one incapable of finding pleasure in anything, even in Margie's favorite topic.

* * *

"DEPRESSION," says Margie, "clinical depression" has no one name, "the severity and length of the condition distinguishes one person's prolonged pain (which is more familiar to himself) and 'other' or 'in the' professional help.

How does a person know whether he or she is going through a clinical depression or just got down variety blues? Margie cites several symptoms commonly prescribed by psychiatrists: "A drastic change in appetite (eating too much or not at all), weight (losing or gaining) and sleeping patterns (inability to get rid of bed in middle of the night), the depressed individual, she says, is "wheelchair." where there no longer is any pleasure from things or activities that used to please, even "the smile of a child."

When Margie first began writing her six columns, she accused her of being a "bane" thinkers, arguing that such openness about her were against Filipino "culture," but guess what, the deluge of her mail and her long-lasting popularity prove that Filipinos are not so much interested in sex, they also want to know how to deal with the many problems in their lives and relationships and life. Margie's writing book may yet help at that (naturally) and compassionate) with more such in the depths of depression, especially if they are people we love.

* * *

Margie's book is not a self-help book, but it is a book that will help many who are struggling with depression, and those who love them. Its publication is also a testament to the courage of Margie herself, who has been willing to share her own struggle with depression in the hope that it will help others.

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The general's lawyer

PUBLIC LIVES

Randy David

MANY who first encountered Imelda Marcos either look at a man in uniform without emotion revealing its interest. It is a perceptual conclusion that has been reinforced by years of martial law. Many people telling yourself that the evil was in the regime, not necessarily in the individuals it used.

It's not always easy to heed this advice. There is man with much ambivalence that I searched him. Years ago, Carlos Garcia's political and personal committee. I imagined the young legislators who were questioning him to be the children of our generation, bristling off the jeans for the accused. But nothing commanded interest ordinary bother me. I was also skeptical of any "rehabilitation" that skips history and moves impatiently, emboldened the trial of us to speak (and write) more openly about mental disorder and behavior, exerting a nonresistance that's still going on despite the efforts of our associations. Margie's new book is a valuable contribution to that legendary. If only her title, she should be ready, mind as a pioneer in the advocacy for social and reproductive health and rights in this country.

* * *

THIS time, Margie disclosed, during lunch with the press at the Power Books branch in Greenhills 4, that her upcoming book (the cover-due, which is why Small Books is announcing it prematurely or ego Margie through) is about (Filipinos) will not be about medical-clinical depression. She said how publishers were seduced by the hurt that of her 10 Aurel books (which I have not read—but must now, for I want to follow through) and is also interviewed many well-known personalities.

Knowing Margie's interest in the intimate dating behavior—the mindset, the antagonist, the seduction—I asked her if she had interviewed Gen. Garcia, the husband of Imelda Marcos and the reputed general's persona. Its powerful was she wicked grow be enticed that I thought it grew over his solitude—the lonely Gen. Salvador Abaya—is shadowy here, if a man's compulsion to be fascinated by the fascinated by the husband, there was no question friend. Garcia was a guilty man.

It was in the middle of these ruminations that I heard Margie say that she had interviewed Garcia's lawyer! Just months ago, Garcia's lawyer was a controversial figure in public as a result of his defense of the Marcos family. Now, he is a lawyer for a man who is also accused of plunder.

Curiosity got the better of me. I asked Margie if she had interviewed Garcia's lawyer. She said she had, and that he was willing to talk to me. I was surprised, but I was also curious. I wanted to know what kind of man would defend a man who is accused of plunder.

I met the lawyer at his office in the Philippine National Police headquarters. He was a tall, handsome man with a warm smile. He was very friendly and welcoming. He told me that he was a graduate of the University of the Philippines College of Law and that he had been a lawyer for many years. He said that he was a member of the Philippine Bar Association and that he was also a member of the Philippine Trial Lawyers Association.

I asked him why he was defending Garcia. He said that he was a lawyer and that he was obligated to defend his client. He said that he was not a politician and that he was not interested in politics. He said that he was only interested in the law.

I asked him if he was afraid of the consequences of defending Garcia. He said that he was not afraid. He said that he was a lawyer and that he was obligated to defend his client. He said that he was not a politician and that he was not interested in politics. He said that he was only interested in the law.

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TALK of the TOWN

Please send feedback to: jsarmiento@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Jaime F. Sarmiento Jr.

Should the top brass step down?

THE INQUIRY into the alleged ill-gotten wealth of Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia spotlights the corruption in the military. When a general, who receives a monthly salary of P58,515, considers a total of P44 million for the current exchange rate] to the United States, owns real estate in Manhattan and Ohio, and keeps more than P50 million in bank accounts in the country, he is likely to be getting funds from illegal sources.

It is generally believed that Garcia, a former comptroller in the Armed Forces of the Philippines, could not have amassed huge sums of money by himself. Some 100 generals and their counterparts in the Philippine National Police are said to have bank deposits of P5 million each.

The Feliciano Commission has identified the modes of corruption in the military—commissions, contingency funds, windfalls, rigged bidding, purchase order splitting, and sale of firearms, ammunition and fuel.

Commission is the practice of turning funds for supplies into cash, while windfall is the laundering of funds, which results from converting into cash the sub-allotment advice for a particular AFP unit.

When a general assigned to the logistics command tells members of the House committee on national defense that he is not aware of any commission in the military, the public has every reason to doubt the veracity of his statement.

Cleaning up the AFP stables is a herculean task, which may require, according to some quarters, nothing less than the firing or resignation of the top brass. But the commander in chief is a "weakling," according to an influential US policy research group, and the generals are not government officials from the Land of the Rising Sun.

AFP Budget: 1997-2005
(in thousand pesos)

Year	Amount
1997	28,004,434
1998	31,140,431
1999	28,009,481
2000	30,736,284
2001	34,907,328
2002	38,661,911
2003	41,962,453
2004	43,774,395
2005	45,015,007

I doubt it can be done

By Col. Romeo Lim (Ret.)

With the current focus on corruption in the military, there have been calls for the top brass to resign. Being a reformist myself, I would tend to subscribe to this school of thought, but I am constrained by two important questions. Will it really help? Is there willingness for it?

While I really think that making all of the top brass resign may pave the way for a much better organization, it runs by too simplistic a solution given the history of corruption in the military.

For the not too distant past, corruption in the military was talked about as a means to an end and only in hushed whispers lest the persons thus let get wind of wars, unnecessary comments and make one eventually end up in some deserted vacation hut in Ulugan Bay feeling bruised upside by stupor.

There were generals then whose sales of companies and good attended not only to immediate family members but also to their subordinates. Positions of unexplained wealth was gloated from the flashy cars, splendid houses, trips abroad and extravagant lifestyle. Yet, one cannot recollect how much money was actually involved. One can only conclude that the figure [is] incredible.

Culture

As perverse, the public is being given an idea of how much money can go into "questionable gifts" and the like. We have been presented with lines and lines of figures in the Feliciano report. Unfortunately, at the right time can be an excellent money-making venture even while in public service.

Unfortunately, while many are appalled at these revelations, the case is characterized by a happy situation of [non-action] in selected circles. Culture Garcia is being discussed and dissected at the military camps in the palengke as much as in military circles.

The corruption in the military has been happening to other and he is long than no doubt all or has greatly diminished. From the lower ranks are exposing to realize that entering the military cannot done any more unless they are willing to [accept] one's conditions for "love of country."

Special bond

Case in point: It has been reported that an unusual occurrence have taken place in the Philippine Military Academy due to lack of numbers. Not many were interested. On the other hand, while basic cooperative courses are sometimes canceled, it is never due to lack of interest. There are just not many to choose from or everyone can be accommodated.

The values of the corps-like courses is, obviously, due to the fact that with only completed by hold the many interested, the higher you go in the hierarchy of military corporation, the top get your "corporate dollars." It has been reported about that this "special bond of unity" is a brotherhood since until, the higher you go in the hierarchy of military, this can never be proven by outsiders like you and me. Which is all but always been an infantry man.

Thus, while I do not wish to generalize, my school of thought is not like this: the higher you go, the greater the possession of power or find it difficult to resign, how much more the top brass who would possess power?

The whole episode brings to mind a certain portion of the Revised Recovery Program, the [illegible] of which [illegible] and became massive Grape Harvester's program of government. It is, he wanted what all generals should resign. I believe he wanted to infuse the AFP with fresher blood. Or maybe, he just wanted to give the younger officers more room to maneuver.

While I may agree, I have no doubts that it can be done.

(The author was chief of staff of the Armed Forces from 2001 to 2002. He retired the Gold Cross medal for bravery in combat six months after he joined the military service as a lieutenant. He was awarded several other medals for his work in the field.)

The generals will cover up, spin stories

By Rene H. Jurgen

Should the generals resign? He said no. They should resign the next season. Then, if they still believe in the Honorable Code, then "no officer does not lie, cheat, steal nor tolerate those who do," then there is still a virtue of no officer and a gentleman—the government officials no more than 100 people and make a public apology for their misconduct. Perhaps, the shame is an assurance for their wrongdoing.

The resignation

The resignation of the generals would show a great example of leadership and morality that we are Filipinos and that a true teacher respects our generals.

Second, they should resign because the AFP needs a new breed of officers to reform itself—leaders who possess the moral courage to make changes. I am referring to the Officer Corps and not the AFP of enrollees. I seriously doubt if the present crop of generals can do a lot there is hope in the younger generation of officers, who have not been wasted too much and still have some idealism left.

Luxurious lifestyle

The generals, past and present, are responsible for the corruption of the AFP today. It is perhaps unfair to the generals only as they merely inherited a corrupt system. However, their quibbling and lying in the congressional hearings tell us that they are no better than their predecessors who did not want to change the status quo. The generals on the stand know that they are guilty of the same offenses as Garcia.

One day years, the generals have closed their eyes and ears to the culture that prevailed there with luxurious lifestyle when millions of Filipinos live impoverished. Many if not all of the generals, and their wives, are guilty of corruption, disunity and indiscipline—directly by knowingly authorizing fraudulent transactions for the enrichment of AFP funds or by seeking commissions from unscrupulous suppliers, and indirectly, for not stopping unauthorized disbursements or "collection of interest" transactions.

On the other hand, they should not resign because without them they will be a sudden discrepancy in the chain of command and a premature withdrawal of support. The Filipino loves this is the belief in them are many capable colonels who can fill the vacuum. Rather than a breakdown of discipline, I predict there will be better discipline since no doubt soldiers that values the generals know, better than we do, what is right and what is not. Besides, saying sorry the generals would give the AFP a real fresh start in reform.

Will they resign? Of course not. Why should they? They still not resign because it is not in their nature despite what the Philippine Military has taught them—courage, integrity and loyalty. As many Westerners say, as one gloss older in the service, only courage and loyalty remain and integrity is erased from the building.

They will not resign because they will not admit that they have done wrong. What's wrong with earning some P100 million when the soldiers don't have combat boots? What's wrong with receiving commissions from suppliers when other government officials, in fact, solicit them, and who wouldn't go to jail for inconsistent deeds for plunder?

They will not resign because they are afraid to face responsibility for their misconduct. Besides, they can run away to [illegible] in Europe like ousted Garcia and the ex-lot of generals are fighting for what they believe in—that there is nothing wrong in earning from the people, that is to their duty to serve the people as enlisted men in coffins, that they can be dishonest so long as they do not get caught.

Pride

I do admit that Garcia will be a great embarrassment to protect the generals who will cry "who's holier than thou" to the rest, and urge generals to [illegible] resign. A colonel will get a bad example for the junior officers who will think that it is OK to lie and steal as long as you cover your tracks. The cultural acceptance is not in their nature despite what the Philippine Military has taught them—courage, integrity and loyalty. As many Westerners say, as one gloss older in the service, only courage and loyalty remain and integrity is erased from the building.

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The generals will cover up, spin stories and continue the people. In this heritage, they close the structure of [illegible] which the Philippine Constitution has enshrined it. The people are in a state of denial and should be ashamed of themselves. They know that they have enslaved every element of the Honorable Code. They have lied to, cheated and stolen from the people and they tolerated one another. But they will not resign because they are hypocrites, because they know they are guilty and could go to jail, they or are not Spartans.

(The author was former Army Officer who organized with the First Asian Human Rights Reporters and the Psychological Operations Group. In 1982, he was Chief of the Strategic Research Division of the Office of Strategic and Special Studies. He was Special Assistant to the Secretary of National Defense when he developed and published the first Philippine Defense White Paper in 1988. He has advocated AFP reform since he was a lieutenant. He is a graduate of West Point, Class of 1966.)

Transforming, not reforming, the AFP

By Col. Ricardo Morales

Corruption is much evident in the armed forces of the Philippines (AFP), that it is possible to plot its graphs here. Studies it is my conviction it will only exacerbate that it permeates the AFP from accomplishing its mission.

As the rest of the AFP's flawed culture is the absence of the experience of failure. Defeat is a Darwinian mechanism that eliminates the weak.

Defeat at the hands of Napoleon compelled the Prussian aristocrats—Clausewitz, Von Moltke, Schlieffen and Guderian—to reexamine and discard Frederick the Great's [illegible] and methods and establish the mechanism of military excellence that Germany has since been renowned.

Germany's defeat during two world wars did not diminish the fact that its military excellence remains to this day. During World War II it was Hitler's interference in purely military affairs that led to Germany's eventual defeat.

The shame of defeat also keeps the Israeli Defense Forces in constant state of operational excellence. Defeat compels organizations to engage in profound and honest self-criticism. Institutions that fail can be discarded and replaced by organizations and procedures that work. Most importantly, defeat promotes innovation and reinforces intellectual ethics.

Besides not suffering defeat, the AFP has failed to recognize failure. Setbacks are rationalized or are unfavorably disseminated so that they can be swallowed or ignored. The culture of cognitive dissonance that developed within the organization encouraged commanders and men staff to ignore any discrepancy between their official orders and the realities of policy, the AFP never learn from setbacks. The results possibly close by due to the true practice of rewarding every year a Medal of Valor, the highest Philippine military decoration, which requires individual acts of heroism and not leadership and [illegible].

Incredibly, the rebels outstrength the AFP. The communist and secessionist rebels have created a handful of successes here and there. However, they gambling and lying in the congressional hearings tell us that they are no better than their predecessors who did not want to change the status quo. The generals on the stand know that they are guilty of the same offenses as Garcia.

One day years, the generals have closed their eyes and ears to the culture that prevailed there with luxurious lifestyle when millions of Filipinos live impoverished. Many if not all of the generals, and their wives, are guilty of corruption, disunity and indiscipline—directly by knowingly authorizing fraudulent transactions for the enrichment of AFP funds or by seeking commissions from unscrupulous suppliers, and indirectly, for not stopping unauthorized disbursements or "collection of interest" transactions.

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Across the NATION

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Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

GMA health cards unpaid

By Tarsoan Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The premiums of 599,000 indigent families in seven Central Luzon provinces have remained unpaid since April when the Arroyo administration made them members of the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (Philhealth), Inquirer sources said.

But Tito Mendiola, Philhealth assistant vice president in Central Luzon, said the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, which should have half of what the national government should pay, had already released P600 million out of the P3 billion worth of premiums due to the state-owned health firm.

The cited amount covers more than two million poor families nationwide.

President Macapagal-Arroyo was criticized when the media drew members of the Philhealth in the run-up to the May 10 elections, saying that was part of Mrs dowser's campaign to win votes.

The premiums, worth P1,200 yearly, cover the whole family, including members who are 60 years old and above.

Mendiola assured that even as the Philhealth awaits full payment, it continues to honor the indigents' cards and process their claims.

"The services to poor members are neither derailed or denied," he said.

Mendiola said the Philhealth in the region processes an average of 1,000 claims and provides benefit payments worth P7 million daily for regular, self-employed, individually paying members and retirees.

The Philhealth, he said, has covered 80 percent or 6.5 million of some 8.3 million residents in Aurora, Bataan, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Tarlac and Zambales. It has 277 accredited hospitals and 2,600 doctors in the region.

"Philhealth has enough money to pay for health care. Our savings, investments and assets are bigger compared to what the contributors [revenue Insurance System and Social Security System have contributed," Mendiola said.

In 2003, financial reports showed Philhealth's collections had reached P12.75 billion, benefit payments, P10.96 billion; and investments, P40.59 billion.

Execs linked to illegal logging

GATTEL, Davao Oriental—Two ranking officials in this town are in hot water after they were named to being behind the massive illegal logging here and in nearby Boston town.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources provincial office here said it was preparing illegal logging charges against provincial board member Camilo Walter while a Mandaya tribal leader had already filed complaints against Gavel Vice Mayor Arsenio Abella.

Benjamin Basilio, provincial environment and natural resources officer, said a local environment group provided them evidence against Walter, the town's latest mayor.

"We will use the evidence provided to us," said Basilio.

He said powerful people in the province would be hurt by the charges. Ferdinand O. Custodio, PDI Mindanao Bureau

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House swamped with bills postponing village polls

By Sonny C. Arlandelo
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY — A deluge of bills that call for the postponement of next year's barangay elections has flooded the House committee on local government, chaired by Negros Oriental Rep. Emilio Macias II.

Macias said about 20 bills have been submitted by his colleagues to his committee for study and recommendation.

Stated on the number of bills, he said it would appear that the sentiment of many congressmen was to postpone the barangay elections due to lack of money.

He said if the government would need between P2 to P3 billion to hold the barangay elections in 2000,

Macias said some of the bills sought to move the elections to 2006.

Others, he said, want to hold it a midseason with the local elections in 2007. Some others want the barangay elections held in 2006.

PDEA opposed to be most popular was the proposal to hold the elections together with local elections in 2007, said Macias.

But, he added, some legislators expressed concern that voters might have a hard time writing so many names on ballots if the barangay elections would be held with local elections.

The congressman said there is another bill that seeks to adopt a block voting scheme for barangay officials, which means, he said, that a candidate for barangay chairs should just run a slate.

In that case, Macias said a vote for a barangay captain will translate as a vote for his councilmen. This will solve the problem of writing so many names in the ballots, he added.

When asked if such arrangement might politicize the barangay election, Macias replied: "I have not seen any barangay official who did not manifest any political leaning, which is expected because it is necessary for them to be able get some projects."

FAMILIARIZATION
Teachers of a school in a remote barangay of Zamboanga start to distribute donated books to pupils whose faces betray no emotion, except for a boy who appears to be sleeping, at their newfound reading treasures.

State hospital short of docs, nurses, funds

By Tyrone Grejo
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO — The Jose B. Lingad Memorial Regional Hospital here, the biggest that the government operates in Central Luzon, is running short of doctors, nurses, medicines, beds and other facilities.

And so Dr. Voltaire Pilan, one of the 38 MOH doctors, stands among the hospital's staff to stay running too.

Near-poor when his four-year residency period is over and he is done with his diplomate test, the 35-year-old surgeon plans to work abroad, the same option that millions of Filipino health care workers have taken.

"Gusto ko mang magsilbi sa bayan, nagpapasan naman ang pamilya ko. Alam ko I want to serve my country, I could not forsake my family, they will go hungry)," Pilan said.

As salary grade 18, his monthly take home pay amounts to only P12,000, Sid tells. Dr. Rosa Pilan, municipal health officer of Mindin, Pampanga, earns P10,000 monthly.

Their additional income, he said, would not be enough as you their son children to private schools.

Dr. Pedro Pople, JBLMRH training director, said Pilan's leaving and JBLMRH's lack of budget to hire additional doctors would further diminish the hospital's staff.

This year, the hospital should have at least 60 residents or doctors undergoing state training, he said. 30,000 Grade only 44, or a shift to of 14.

"We've been feeling this in the last two years," Pople said of the reduction in the number of doctors joining the JBLMRH training program and complementing the already lean medical force.

He said many young medical graduates or even practitioners with 20 or 30 years of practice behind them had drifted out of the training.

Overseas, he said Filipino nurses are paid $1,500 (P52,245) a month, so someone that Pilan enlisted to assist sorely in his duty two years.

Pople said the national trend shows medical schools are increasingly getting less enrollees and the few doctors that are graduating are going to nurses. The Philippines is now the foremost provider of nurses and caregivers worldwide.

JBLMRH alone lost 20 of its nurses since 2001. They have gone to London, the United States, Canada and Saudi Arabia, Pople said, showing a report tracking their places of employment.

Pilan said he knows 80 people in his batch at the Far Eastern University and among his friends who have drifted to nursing.

Pilan said the rest of the young doctors with JBLMRH are not only underpaid but also overworked, Pople said.

The 350-bed capacity hospital reached double capacity on Friday.

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Halloween sa Pinas: Gaya-gaya o Pinoy talaga?

INQUIRER Mindanao

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Nico A. Alconaba

Boy Wonder's world

By Clairaine Godinez-Ortega
Iligan City

FOR A child who had mastered the alphabet at 15 months old and who, at two, began reading the Science Encyclopedia for Children, and, who, a year later, demonstrated to be seven in school, we asked Pete Abriel Lapuz, three years and 10 months old, what book he would be reading in case it rains for days.

"The weather in my Science book?" Pete, loudly called Dodoy replied.

Pete's parents, Isidoro, 48, a former parish priest of Dumingag, Zamboanga del Sur, and currently overseer in the Iglesiapiniong Baysa of Music, Zamboanga del Sur, and Veronica, 41, a part-time lawyer in Dipolog City, moved to Iligan City to bring him to psychologist Dr. Miriam Cua because they were getting bored with his Kinder II lessons.

In June this year, Pete was enrolled in Kinder I in Dipolog City's St. Mary's Academy. He had learned through all the lessons in the next month, he was transferred to Kinder II.

Kinder II teacher Bonsly Bonlle told the inquirer.net Thursday that "Pete is very intelligent but he lacks some common sense and he doesn't like to write down his answers."

In her report, Cua recommends a special teacher and a special school for Pete saying that Pete "would be considered a child prodigy given the right environment, motivation and proper education." She however clarified that a child prodigy is called such after a period of 10 years when the area he excels in, whether in music or mathematics, has been established.

IQ was. 137 (Very Superior) while his Performance IQ was 142 (Very Superior) and 146 (Very Superior) in the Verbals IQ test.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has instructed her staff to help the parents of 3-year-old boy wonder Pete Lapuz contact the Philippine Association for the Gifted.

'Walking dictionary'

The sibling Adelmer explains, may have come from his grandmole, Rhel Colubio, known as the "walking dictionary of Dapitan," the place of exile of national hero Jose Rizal.

In his Kinder II workbooks and test papers, Pete previewed his monthly exams in Math and Language with only one or two mistakes in English, Science, Filipino and Christian Living.

Bonlle said, Pete would often leave the class, seem to look for a computer on the school building's first floor after his Computer class.

On an ordinary day, if Pete isn't reading, he plays with his two younger brothers and watches his favorite TV programs on the Kinderchannel, Cartoon Channel, Disney Channel, Animal Planet and Cartoon Network.

"At 10 months old, he would call out the alphabet in his sleep and would be reinserted daily when he could bail his books under his bed," Bienvenber said.

Noting that there are no intelligence tests by Filipinos, Dr. Cua of the Mogen Behavioral Systems & Services Consultancy conducted for Pete the Stanford of the questions and instructions from the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale 1, the Wechsler Pattern & Performance Scale of Intelligence Test, and, the Full Scale IQ test for the 3-year and 10-month-old group.

Pete's IQ tests for the second day were hardly one which he began to read and finish Cinderella.

Cua said that when the Pete Boy arrived and when he spotted a framed note from Mathew (12:33) on the wall, he read this promptly and with ease. "People may doubt what you say but they will always believe what you do for the love to known and recognized judged by its fruit."

Did he understand what he was reading? The boy only smiled.

As he began to get used to our presence, he showed us his book in Christian Living, enumerating the headings of each lesson and their corresponding page numbers. He then instructed us which page to see exciting lines memory a poem, "Beauty for the Seeing Eye," going over the words "Dawnin—bound—bloom—sense" and laughing out loud at our mock surprise.

Intellectually stimulated

Dr. Leny Luz Valdez, who has a master's degree in Reading from the University of the Philippines Diliman, Quezon City and a doctorate in language Studies, said the boy may be "intellectually stimulated" but "he still has to develop his language learn the usual functions of words as well as to associate meanings to words through his experiences and exposure," citing the Schemas and William Crain's reading theories.

"He may know the graphic-phonics of words but he may not necessarily understand their meanings yet," she added.

And, if, on the other hand, this isn't an added inclination of Pete's high intelligence, consider the instance when he was asked about "psychology," a word we picked at random and which he pronounced correctly.

His answer: "It's for my kuhol (snail) (I don't know that yet)." And all this coming from a boy who wants "his" to the statement: "Jesus died on the cross because of our sins." It was his only error in a 20-item test in religion.

He made the mistake because he was asked to tap what the biblical story was all to him on your old statement, according to Kinder II teacher Bonlle, apparently he is the only Kinder II pupil allowed to take a nap during class hours.

Over a week later, the IQ test results showed that on the Cultures Free Test, Stoke L Dove's IQ was 161 Pete Superior with his mental age placed at 6.5. In the Stychsler Primary & Pre-School Scale of Intelligence Test the same 3-year and 10-month-old group, his Verbal

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DECLARATION ON THE MINERALS ACTION PLAN

We, the partners and members of the Regional Advisory Committee of the Foundation for the Philippine Environment unanimously:

1. Strongly support the Supreme Court's decision and urge their consistent upholding of the unconstitutionality of Financial and Technical Assistance Agreements (FTAA) as promulgated in the case of Western Mining Corporation;
2. Reject the National Minerals Policy (Executive Order 270) and scrap the draft Mineral Action Plan as another attempt to subvert the decision of the Supreme Court;
3. Continue to oppose the Mining Act of 1995 and uphold national patrimony;
4. Oppose all forms of large-scale mining as it endangers ecological balance;
5. Facilitate provision of environment-friendly livelihood opportunities to support the indigenous peoples and upland dwellers;
6. Compel government agencies to strictly implement the Local Government Code (LGC), Indigenous People's Rights Act (IPRA), and the PEPPER ACT in relation to Social Acceptability, Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) and the protection of the environment;
7. Vehemently denounce the threats, condescending and divisive bias against civil society as ignorant, irresponsible, narrow-minded and "anti" when it comes to mining concerns and issues as expressed by mining proponents at National Mining Conference in December 2003;
8. Call on the President of the Republic of the Philippines and all the instrumentalities of government to respect the Supreme Court's ruling;
9. Urge all incumbent and future national leaders and legislators to enact pro-people and pro-environment laws and policies.

We call on the support of all sectors of society to oppose all forms of mining and destructive ways of utilization of our natural resources.

We believe that harnessing resources towards sustaining biodiversity conservation and sustainable development for the present and future generations is our responsibility towards God's gift of creation.

We pray that we all become faithful stewards of Mother Earth.

FPE National RAC-Partners-EAP Meeting
Sagittarius Hotel, Bacolod City
July 12-16, 2004

Signed:

Police nab Quezon solon's brother for drug dealing

LUCENA CITY—Police arrested a brother of a congressman of Quezon believed to be one of the biggest drug dealers in the province and seized drugs from him.

Supt. Elmer Francis Ferrera, this city's police chief, said police arrested Orville Alcala alias Abel, brother of Rep. Dorotea Alcala and provincial board member Vicente Alcala.

Orville, in his middle 40s and resident of Barangay Cotta here, was arrested past noon Friday.

A police team headed by Chief Insp. Elmer Tandog also recovered P40,000 in cash, an unlicensed cal. 22 Magnum revolver, digital weighing scale and a Nokia 3210 cellular phone.

The Alcalas are a known political clan in the province.

Cockpit fans

The journalist, former board member Bernabendo Alcala, served the city and the provincial government in various capacities and was once the governor's vice governor.

Orville was arrested with eight others suspects aboard a Chevrolet van bearing plate number UTV 779, while the vehicle crossed the PNR track in the village going to the cockpit arena in the southern of the city.

He was arrested by virtue of a warrant of arrest issued by Judge Bienvenido Bhagwat of Regional Trial Court-Branch 55 on June 29 on charges of illegal possession of firearms and explosives.

Ferrera said two plastic sachets were recovered from Alcala during a body search.

The four other sachets—including the gun, money and weighing scale—were discovered inside a bolo bag placed under the front seat of the van.

Representative Alcala kept his distance from the incident.

"God knows how the whole family tried its best to save Abel. If he denied of the law, he have suffer the full consequences of his act," the congressman said in a phone interview.

Police said they conducted test positive "one hour" from one of Alcala's networks of drug pushers on Thursday.

Top of the list

"When we were tipped off that Alcala himself would close another drug transaction inside the cockpit, we planned the arrest," Ferrera said.

The police chief said Alcala has been listed as the No. 1 drug pusher operating in the city.

The suspect had several touches with the law three years ago, also on charges of illegal drug pushing.

The suspect did not resist arrest. But he denied that the gun and illegal drug and paraphernalia belonged to him. "What I have with me was only money for the cockfight derby. But I don't know why the police only reported P50,000. Where's the rest?"

"I'm no longer into this illegal drug business. That's all past of the past," he was heard saying inside the police station.

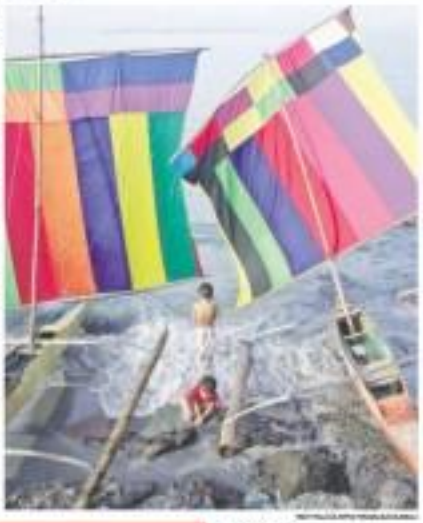
However, Alcala tested positive to a drug test that was immediately conducted after the arrest.

His companions all swore that they were not drug pushers and users.

"We're all cockfight aficionados. We only fetched a ride with Alcala going to the cockfight," one of them told the inquirer.

The suspect and his companions were detained at the city jail here.

The seized crystal-clear substance has been forwarded to the police crime laboratory to determine if it is really shabu. DEXTER MORENO JR., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau



COLOR SAILS
Badjao children play beside colorful vintas, the traditional fishing vessels that had been identified with Zamboanga City, that are docked on the shore of a boulevard in the city.

Deadline sought in solution of radioman's slay

LAOAG CITY—Ilocos Norte Gov. Ferdinand Marcos Jr. is getting impatient with the three-year investigation of hard broadcaster Roger Mateo's slay, and now wants the Philippine National Police top brass to help solve the murder.

Marcos said he had asked Director General Edgardo Aglipay, PNP chief, to meet him and the local police to set some deadlines in going after those behind the slay.

Mateo, the first provincial journalist here killed by an unidentified hitlist, was killed almost three months ago. No suspects have been identified in the murder considered as work-related.

"This is taking so long. In the beginning, there was progress and after that it ceased to run. They have run out of leads. It is time to call in the big guns and solve this," Marcos said on Thursday.

In another development, the integrated file of the Philippine Army Ilocos Norte chapter also satisfied the PNP and the National Bureau of Investigation due to what they described as their lack of interest in pursuing the murders of three former members.

Former Vice Gov. Mariano Nalupta Jr., IBP president, called the NBI, the PNP and the provincial board to a meeting to update the group on the extent of their investigation of the killings of Judge Antonio Rubio and lawyers Hermenio Saavedra and Manuela Alburo.

Nalupta said nothing has been heard of the cases to date since the three were murdered in separate incidents beginning 1981.

Marcos said he was taking a personal stance on Mateo's murder along with the series of killings that occurred after the radioman's slay.

Rarely was anyone after Mateo's murder, six other killings took place on separate occasions in what authorities considered as perpetrated by hired guns.

The latest victim included accomplices of the provincial treasurer's office, Jocelyn Lorenzo. Lorenzo and her husband were attacked on their way home on Oct. 19. Lorenzo's husband survived the attack. Cristino Arnaldez, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Army says 6 Sayyaf men slain

COTABATO CITY—Continued military operations in Southcentral Mindanao last week resulted in the killing of at least six Abu Sayyaf members and their local allies, a ranking Army commander said Saturday.

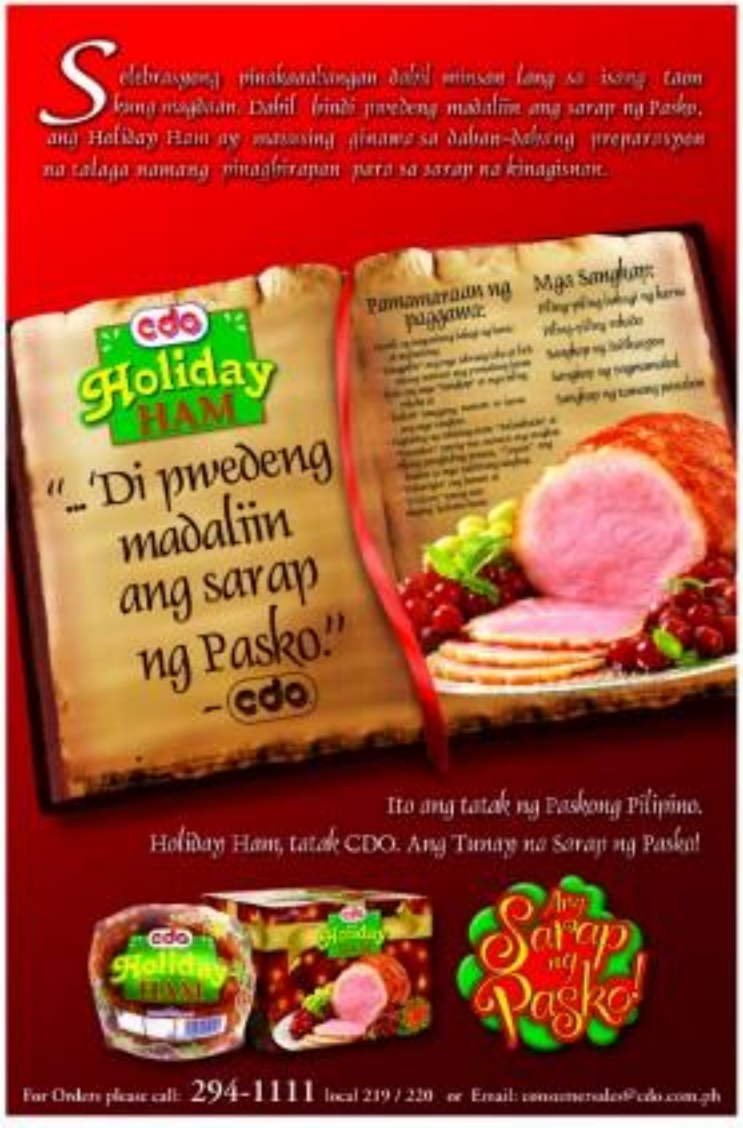
Col. Alfredo Cayton, chief of the Army's 602nd Infantry Brigade, said the combined forces of the Abu Sayyaf and Abu Sofia, both linked with the Jemaah Islamiyah, have been engaging government troops in guerrilla since Oct. 6 in Pikit municipality.

He said the latest encounter, where the military had no one air casualty, was on Oct. 20 in Lake Sebu town in South Cotabato.

"There was no body count," explained Cayton, "because the casualties (Abu Sayyaf members) were taken away by their comrades in their withdrawal. The wounded are their problem. But in the area were being engaged and carried in the mountains."

He said the government suffered no casualty.

Cayton said the Abu Sayyaf under Khadafy Janjalani and Ismilon Baptilan have been leading the bandits. They merged with the Abu Sofia, which is responsible for a series of kidnappings. Charlie Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau



'PA-ITLOG ITLOG'

Petty corruption starts in PMA, says Abaya

By Frank Cimatu and Vincent Cabreza
INQUIRER Luzon Bureau

PMA cadets at Fort del Pilar where the issues of bravery and academy traditions shape the future of the AFP.

FORT BIS. PILAR, Baguio City—Corruption begins at home.

Gen. Narciso Abaya, Armed Forces chief of staff, said yesterday corruption charges against some Philippine Military Academy alumni had their roots in their cadet days at the PMA.

Abaya called this culture of corruption "pa-ITlog-itlog na naglaging normal" (eggs that become chickens)" in his speech during the 106th Foundation Day of the PMA here.

Abaya, who will retire on Friday, said the cadets have this term for petty extortion.

"'Hulidong,' the euphemism that is used for petty extortion, has no place in the officer development process. As shared by another PMA alumnus in the congressional hearings (on alleged military corruption), petty extortions are cultivated infinitesimal that give rise to the culture of corruption," he said.

"I encourage the utilization of eradicating malpractices, especially the practice of obtaining personal favors under the guise of developing fellowership and military obedience to a subordinate," Abaya told cadets and guests, who included United States Ambassador Francis Ricciardone.

But Abaya defended the foundations of the academy.

"We (AFP) as it adores the lessons of history and the venerable academy traditions combine to shape the future of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, and I would even venture to say every institution aligned to Philippine defense and security," he said.

But he admitted the PMA always took the brunt for scandals plaguing the military.

"It has been espoused by some that it is the PMA's ideal environment that should be blamed for deceptively conditioning the minds of the cadets that everything comes in black and white," he said.

"With minds nurtured in a world detached from reality, it is argued that the PMA, in a way, distorts the cadet's world view." Abaya said the readily available amenities and privileges contribute to the chasm as these develop a misconception of what PMA graduates could expect from alife in the military service.

Abaya, a member of Class 1971, said critics fail to see PMA's impact on developing character.

"In PMA, there are rules, but outside its walls, they are at best only guides. Often times will be dominance in actions and judgments in military service and at the end of the day, a (most) competent should unmistakably point to only true worth the very values of courage, integrity and loyalty," he said.

Maj. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana, PMA superintendent, said the PMA continues to pursue those goals, despite its fiscal deficit.

He said the PMA would continue to run on a deficit after previous administrations increased the number of its cadet enrollees with the guarantee that it would receive a higher budget in 2003.

"But the government retrenched the 2002 budget, so we had to rely on (Abaya to send us more funds) for 2003 and 2004," Sobejana said.

Prospects of a second consecutive budget for 2005 could jeopardize PMA operations for them, he said.

He said the PMA is running an inventory of all its operations to determine how to cut back on expenses. The PMA is renting a giant Hollywood-style lighted billboard fencing the PMA acronym, he said.

Built by Class 1970 during the term of retired Maj. Gen. Rafa de Veyra, a former PMA superintendent, the PMA sign has been damaged by typhoons and is costing the PMA huge electricity bills to operate, Sobejana said.

ABAYA: Three words to answer the toast jokes—courage, integrity and loyalty, the PMA's motto.

Abaya: Man in a hurry to retire away from line of fire

(Story page A1)

would speed up the days, hours, seconds and clicks to Oct. 29, my retirement day," Abaya said in a speech during the PMA's 106th anniversary here on Saturday.

He described the recent cases involving PMA alumni, including his Class 1971 mainit (classmate) Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia, as "unfortunate."

"The pride and prestige of the academy have never seen darker days," he told cadets and guests who included US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone.

Test jokes

Abaya said he was irked by the toast jokes which said that the PMA had become the "Philippine Military Academy," in the light of the corruption scandal rocking the military.

The PMA, one of the most prestigious military training institutions in Asia, marked its 106th Foundation Day on Saturday.

During the congressional hearings, an alumnus of the House of Representatives) expressed dismay over the toast messages going around maligning the academy. In this age of technology and unbridled intrigue, surely they had found their way to the corps," he said.

Abaya said cadets needed only three words to answer these toast messages: Courage, loyalty and loyalty—the PMA's motto.

He also called on PMA cadets to stand by the academy's honor code amid the controversy.

"The challenge to regain the glory is a call order, but there is no doubt in my mind that with character, resilience, an indomitable spirit and a reform agenda founded on proper values, we will overcome," he said.

Remain united

Maj. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana, PMA superintendent, said the current crisis should unite the PMA.

"Our predecessors once again is entered and trained. But while the wind blows fiercely today upon the military profession and upon this institution, we should remain united, believing as we have a history to the past, that we shall overcome these questions on our integrity and tolerance as an institution," Sobejana, a member of Class 1972, said.

"MY DAUGHTER'S home in Germersheim," says Meinol Schwartz, former director of the German Defense Ministry High Office on Research and Development who taught young Filipino senior military officials about ethics and combat skills at the German General Staff College. But the country's stable politicians forced this APP to discontinue the German exchange program.

THE PRIDE and joy of her parents, Dr. Norma Schwartz, 26, serves at the Bundeswehr Krankenhaus in Berlin with a rank equivalent to captain in the APP.

Father of first and only Filipino doctor in German army mentor to RP generals

manded Brig. Gen. Romeo Dominguez, commanding general of the Northern Luzon Command, said Ong.

German ethics

He said he was "fascinated" though not surprised by the commissioning ceremony Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia, the Armed AFP comptroller who is accused of wrecking away millions of dollars in illegitimate wealth.

In his talk none of his students were involved in any such dishonorable exhibition in the service, a fact that he attributed to the tough discipline of German military ethics.

"Germans are blunt and formal because that's how we become honest. We are negative, we plan ahead, and we follow that path. We taught them to [your generals], he said.

"In last you have very, very good generals, very honest generals in this country. They know that the world is changing," he added.

He said the Filipino generals that he taught understood their training in Germany at a time the German nation was also changing, with the collapse of the Berlin Wall that used to divide the democratic West from the communist East.

Ong, who studied under Schmitz as a colonel in 1980, said the evolution of German military tactics and philosophies into today's created the fear of the Soviet threat, which altered how the military viewed world politics.

Shunning war in Iraq

Schmitz said this thinking accounts for Germany's reluctance to the United States-led war on Iraq. The German minister, he said, was more concerned with restoring economies and reversing besieged nations.

Ong said Filipino military officers who were poisoned with the German world view are slowly internalizing the concept to Philippine military politics.

He said the German courses were the best he had ever had among the foreign studies that he said through.

"Captain Schwartz's rise in German military service is overwhelming because she re-

mains the link between generations of Philippine military officers and the German Army," said Ong.

"No this is probably the only Filipino today with a real and intimate connection to every Filipino general because of her father. Generals come to their house often. I remember Bonita as a 2-year old. She was still drinking her milk, but I think she will remember me," he added.

Leyte health care grads help reverse brain drain

Viewpoint, p. A-3

ut their babies. Her parents they moved back to health and she already widows hands they had held all their married on the mat table.

They are the graduates of the School for Health Sciences here, who have chosen to serve in the country's poorest communities, on leaving the opportunity to join the exodus of health workers abroad.

An offshoot of the University of the Philippines Manila, the 870-bed 160-year-old public Client system of training "hardest" doctors and has in its mission mandate the out migration trend among Filipino health workers.

For the past 27 years, the school has been turning out doctors, nurses, midwives and dentists, mostly health workers, about 95 percent of whom have chosen to serve in the rural areas.

For 21-year-old Aly Domingo of Tibiao, Antique, whose ambition in the ward to go to Manila and work in a hospital, a graduation in the OR was a problem.

He never thought he would commit to anything having had to work since the fifth grade just to be able to continue school.

Education a luxury

Education was a luxury in the Domingo household, as his father passed away when he was six. His mother, a fish vendor, finished school herself, was left to support six children.

Domingo did not have to pass an entrance exam, nor did he have to show excellent grades. All that was asked of him was a commitment to serve his community when he finished.

His first he needed to be sure enough to allay reasons was to be home eventually when he had learned to help his teenager and to pay in turn.

Domingo did not disappoint the town that recommended him in his tenth third place in the 2000 midwifery board examination and is just months away from getting his nursing degree, also from the SHS.

He has since delivered many babies into the world and two of his lives called to minister to the sick in his barangay of 6,000 households.

But others with his skill sense stories that he still does not know enough to be able to care from but is invariably told that they are willingness to help sometimes matters pain.

He does not mind that most of his fears not all fit-pits for his services are bundles of long long hours, chicken and cooked food.

Community embrace

"The way the community has embraced me is touching. I felt at least with you and I am happy that our house is the same outlook and has floor. At least people understand that I could do so much to help my community," she said.

Schmitz said she had no plans of joining other nurses making a beeline for the metropolis or flow of hospitals in the United States and Canada, although the prospect of earning a lot of money is tempting.

"I just think so myself that everyone knows, who will be left to take care of the people who need medical attention? I guess I can still idealistic but I owe it to my community to stay and besides, it is just money," she said.

Schmitz and Domingo credit their love for the community to the training they then got from the SHS, where leaders-type curriculum is unique among institutions of higher learning.

Ladder-type curriculum

The UP-SHS was set up by the UP Board of Regents in 1976 in response to the grim health statistic, poorer situation then, which is still very much true at present.

At the time, more than half of the medical graduates were leaving for abroad, but most acutely

AWARE. Rose Schmitz and Art Domingo: We supervise, but super-trainee in the dispensed, doctor does the administration.

served for Negros in the SHS.

"I did not know what to expect when I got in, but through the years the school established me in something else. They nourished my skills and made me realize that I could do so much to help my community," she said.

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among graduates of state medical colleges, where three out of every five graduates went overseas.

In 1973, 38 percent of nurses left the country and of the 7,129 nurses in public services, only 16 percent were in the rural areas.

The UP College of Medicine decided to develop a medical program designed to address the specific health needs of rural communities.

The heart of the program is the step-ladder curriculum in which students intern in increasingly more complex health situations, going from health assistant to doctor in a single, sequential and continuous curriculum.

In its bills in 12 weeks, a trainee is certified as a barangay health worker. It is enough to pursue further studies. In two enroll for another six quarters in the Community Health Worker Program, qualifying as a midwife.

Midterms can choose to stay another five quarters to take a nursing degree, and 29 more quarters to qualify to be a medical doctor.

Biggest midwifery school

The SHS has graduated over 1,210 midwives, making it the country's biggest midwifery school. Almost all of the graduates, or 94 percent, passed the board, many of them finishing in the top 10.

In between the program looks to the service or home leave of at least three months, where the scholars study what they have learned in communities.

"I would say that over half of the time that they spend here is spent in the communities. Many of them live with local families. This exposure make them realize the duty to meet their help in the personal areas, making them want to stay in the country," said SHS Dean Bernard S. Gregio.

Gregio says with pride that as of July 2004, only three out of the school's 306 medical graduates are abroad. Most are municipal health officers and medical officers in the district and general hospitals.

Of the 207 nursing graduates, only 16 or 13 percent are abroad. About 223 provide are public health nurses and 14 percent are staff nurses in district hospitals. Less than 4 percent of the midwifery graduates are abroad.

Initially 70 percent of SHS's first graduates came from the Eastern Visayas, but the share has dropped to 35 percent by 2003.

180 slots yearly

The school opens about 160 slots yearly now and schools aspire for 200 by 2005. They are given a living subsidy of P1,200, which is provided by their communities, plus a quarterly book allowance of P500.

The slots are distributed to regions with a need for community workers, based on health statistics, population and economic status. Recruitment and admission do not put a premium on academic performance.

This process says that the school, as it the SHS cannot hold their own against students from other schools.

The SHS has a 130 percent passing rate for the nurses' board, 94 percent for midwives and 90 percent for medical doctors. In fact, the 5th and 10th placers in the 2004 medical board exams came from SHS.

"What a surprise to us is not to see as community service," Gregio said.

One could argue that the SHS graduates have no choice but to serve because of a requirement that they should serve for at least two years for every year that they stay in school, which runs up to 17 years for a doctor.

But as Gregio points out, the requirement was only enforced in the late 1990s. The early graduates could have chosen to leave, but majority did not, like Domingo and Salinas.

Self-esteem

"It does something to my self-esteem to know people say there is that boy who still works for the old folk with his mother, but who has gone [long - way]," said Domingo.

Domingo has ever wanted reaching his 56-year-old mother to rest.

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Multi-Line Simply Creative

Sunday BIZ
Business Features Editor Margie Quiniquo-Espino

CLASSIFIEDS
Pages B7, B10 to B15

TOMT Gloria today, inset shows him at three years old.

Two mentors set him in the right direction

By Margie Quiniquo-Espino

FIRST JOB

"When we can finally stop and smell the flowers, we know we've made the right decision."

Greg and Norma Lapeña

For Greg and Norma Lapeña, life has been quite a journey. Now, in the comfort of each other's arms, they can finally slow down, sit back, and literally smell the flowers. And Ayala Westgrove Heights is the perfect backdrop for their already colorful lives. A doctor and a nurse, they've been partners since the day they met. They decided to move to the U.S. shortly after getting married. There, they had successful careers, a beautiful home by the lake, a loving family. Life couldn't be more wonderful. Or so they thought.

In 2001, they were back in Manila for a visit. Coming home was a chance to enjoy the things they missed -- family, old friends, spontaneous get-togethers. They'd been away for over 30 years, but always knew they would return to spend their golden years in the Philippines. It seemed like fate, then, when a nephew invited them to take a look at a piece of property he and his wife had just acquired. After a quick tour, Greg and Norma knew they'd finally found the place. Fresh, clean air. Beautiful views. Peace and security. A place distant enough from the maddening city, but not detached from its comforts. They felt it was going to be big, very big. So that very same day, they found themselves making a reservation.

Ayala Westgrove Heights, after all, is designed to be a self-contained community. All the necessary amenities are continuously being built around it: schools, hospitals, commercial centers, groceries, churches. Only 15 minutes away from Alabang, it's a sanctuary that does not isolate, but offers a chance to escape at the end of the day.

Inside, they are surrounded by lush mango groves and rolling hills: a cool breeze makes quiet afternoons all the more wonderful. The garden, clubhouse and children's playground for their grandchild are reason enough not to even leave the village gates.

Greg believes that all these things make Ayala Westgrove Heights the New Big Thing. He knows that with the Ayala Land guarantee, he can't go wrong. How Ayala Alabang thrived as a community is proof of this. And looking at their new home, he knows that this is truly the investment of their lifetime.

For Greg and Norma, life slows down at Ayala Westgrove Heights. Slow enough for them to spend each day reading mystery novels, listening to classical music or just enjoying each other's company. Being with the one you love, in a place you love -- that is exactly how they wanted to spend the rest of their journey together.

AYALA
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HESTIA Brand Manager Tina Imasen and Penthouse Marketing Communications Manager Gigi Tiu

Iced tea drink goes after 'lite' market

A LEADING segment of iconic's youth market is embracing a healthy lifestyle, according to research conducted by Hestia, the country's No. 1 iced tea, is going after the "lite" market with The Herbal Lite, the country's first lite iced tea.

"Hestia Lite is the ideal beverage for today's fitness-conscious youth who enjoy the refreshing taste of iced tea but [look] twice the calories. It contains 50 percent less sugar than any powdered beverage in the market, making it a suitable drink for those who want to maintain a toned body," says Hestia brand manager Tina Imasen.

Their major advantage the product has over the other so-called "lite" or diet drinks in the market today is that it maintains the same taste of a regular Hestia. Retaining the same taste is important because of the people in Hestia, as they took great pains to ensure that the refreshing taste won't be compromised.

It is also a misconception that in order to understand and appeal to what consumers want. Hestia has been the preferred iced tea of Filipinos for 23 years now. It has been involved in green marketing via its annual Hestia Beach Volley competitions.

Now on its eighth year, the Beach Volley is an anticipated summer sports activity.

On the lifestyle front, Hestia Lite recently joined hands with Penthouse, the country's leading fashion retail chain, in a campaign dubbed "Take What You Want Right."

Explaining their choice of Penthouse, Imasen says: "We have chosen Penthouse to be our partner for this campaign because aside from being one of the leading clothing retailers in the country, Penthouse also associates with Hestia Lite the idea that the cool, the way to look good and feel right about one's self attitude is best manifested through one's fashion style."

"This, today's youth are one and the same with their forefathers in their restless proclivity as well. Hestia Lite helps them do just that by giving them the refreshing taste of iced tea without the extra calories, thereby ensuring that their bodies remain fit," adds Imasen.

Imasen is confident that Hestia Lite will help bolster consumption. No. 1 position in the market, not ultimately becomes the choice of today's youth for a drink that's "lite" and right.

A TYPICAL day at the main store of St. Joseph Drugstore in Dagupan City

Hard work reaps rewards for homegrown drugstore

By Yolanda Sotelo-Fuerte
PDN Northern Luzon Bureau

DAGUPAN CITY—Dorothy Cruz and her sister, Marilene Cruz-Bernal, remember the days when, as young children, they and their siblings would help in the St. Joseph drugstore that their late father put up in downtown Dagupan.

"Summer vacations meant working in the drugstore daily. Then, our customers, especially those from the city, knew us well and would call us 'Si, Joseph' as we passed by," the sisters recall.

Those days of hard work paid off.

Dorothy, 47, is now chair of nurses—Ilocos, while Marilene, 42, is chief operating officer of the St. Joseph chain of drugstores—adjudged the first national venture in the retail chain store category of the Drug Store Quality awards given by The Drug Store Association of the Philippines in Baguio City recently.

Ramon Bernal, operations manager of the drugstore chain, says it was the Department of Trade and Industry that nominated the 19 drugstores and 171 single stores in the country. The winner in the single store category was Pharmacy Corner in Quezon City.

The DTI nominated the stores using seven key factors of evaluation. These are image and appearance, leadership, strategic planning, customer and market focus, information and analysis, human resource focus and business organizational results.

The Cruz sisters were actually the third generation Cruzes involved in the drugstore business.

Their late grandfather, Mariano Cruz, owned a drugstore in the municipal town, and in Dagupan after World War II.

"Our father, Jose Cruz, spent his adolescent years helping his parents tend the drugstore," the sisters said.

Where time-tested hundred tin pharmacy drawers in Manila, he assisted his wife in running the drugstore, expanding its operations to include wholesaling to small drug stores in Northern Luzon.

When Jose and his wife Lolita started raising a family, they became business partners as well.

As the original drugstore was "inherited" by his brother, Jose and Lolita established their own pharmacy, which they named St. Joseph Drugstore in 1969.

"It was a small store, with just a 2.5-meter frontage. But my father gave it a very personalized service. He was there from [the store's] opening until it closed. Customers from the city and neighboring towns called him by his first name and he called them by their first names. Dagupan then was a small city," Dorothy said.

Jose died in 1987, leaving behind the drugstore business to his wife and six children.

It was Dorothy and Marilene who took up business courses in view of pharmacy ("because we can't stand chemistry") who became involved in the business while their other siblings pursued other fields.

Marilene says the drugstore remained "small" for a long time, until it was only in 2000 that the aggressive expansion was carried out.

Before that year, there were only five branches of St. Joseph Drug Store. At present, the chain has 23 stores—eight in Dagupan, two each in the cities of Baguio, Urdaneta and Alaminos and San Fernando, La Union, and one each in Tarlac, Bayambang, Malasiqui, Mangaldan and Villasis—all in Pangasinan.

Opening a branch in Metro Manila is not also a constant possibility for the drugstore chain, which has about 175 employees, Marilene says.

It was not always easy for the drugstore owners, though. When Dagupan was devastated by the 1990 earthquake, their stores were damaged, and like most businessmen in the area, "we got depressed," the sisters say.

Mother knows best

It was their mother Lolit's unwavering faith that pulled them through.

"She was so strong and she gave us the strength to go on," the sisters say.

They say their mother, the president of the corporation, remains the strong force behind the business.

"We consult her on major decisions and we trust her decisions because of her experience in the business and the results [are a strong] support," they say.

The drugstore owners, however, continue to refuse to sell contraceptives, like pills and condoms, in their stores. They say selling contraceptives would contradict their beliefs as Catholics.

"The Catholic Church does not approve of contraceptives so we decided not to sell such products since about five years ago. I believe we became leaders in business history," Marilene, a mother of two, says.

Health program

But the Cruzes are supportive of other health programs such as that of PhilPlan, a non-government organization that asked them help in the fight against tuberculosis.

"We inform people who buy over-the-counter drugs, but who do not [undergo] medical exams, to go to a doctor first," they say.

They also support medical missions by giving free medicines.

Dorothy says they visit Agrarian communities only for medical missions. "We go to the provinces [to] encourage [the] government's [campaign on] the major program," and we usually give medicines."

The drugstore also conducts free clinics, basic screening, medical missions and other [free] projects as a part of its social responsibility.

As Dorothy and Marilene look back on their childhood days when they had to load the family drugstore, they can only be thankful that their late father trained them to become the owners businessmen that they are today.

Two mentors set him in the right direction

Turn to page B3

When he was six, he was the "mirare" of the ticket person at a movie house.

In exchange for being allowed to see for free, he said a friend went get movie passes.

He and his friend would sit Royal Tru-Orange and munch on Sugar as they enjoyed the English movies.

He still remembers watching "Robbie the Robot."

But the blissful experience was put to an end when a year when his mother discovered his truancy.

But he was not punished for not watching movies. Instead, he could only watch with the family every payday.

That experience should have given him a clue about his passion, but it did not.

Tony insisted on becoming an engineer or a businessman, even if he hated figures and failed at basic course subjects.

Bad at numbers

"I was lost. I did not know what to do. I wanted to be in business but I was bad in math. I was taking [the] subject till graduated," Tony says, referring to the four years and his graduate at the University of the Philippines, who did not know what course to take.

All the time, however, he remained passionate about watching movies, being a regular at Cinerama like Bellavue, Odeon, Avenue.

His movie buddy was Mel Delatorre, a famously "loud" at Ayala Ilaya Hs, and now vice president of Philippine Airlines.

While still dreading on what to do with his life, he did complete all the units in the speech and drama class.

So well, in fact, that his professor, Ms. Amethyst Arroyo, encouraged him to go for a BA in Theater Arts. Tony was persuaded to take the course.

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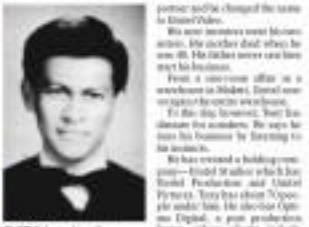
DIRECTING Tony during his senior year in college.

WITH some of his frustrated "friends."



GLORIA during his college graduation

He recalls telling Del Rosario to watch out for Mabini Cruzes in the world because [illegible]

Getting bored

Despite his miserable start in advertising, it was not long before Tony got bored.

He asked permission to study for a while, so he went to the US and took up special courses on film and advertising at the Pratt Institute of Design in New York.

When he saw there changed his mindset and vision. He came back to the Philippines here to start up agencies.

"At that time in the Philippines, businesses were owned by businessmen. In the US, it was the creatives—directors, writers who became businessmen," he says.

He decided to be one of those creatives, and it took him six months to earn his senior citizenship.

He told PAC of his decision and he agreed to until a replacement was found.

But he wanted his business at the worst time to do so—1981. The country was in an economic crisis, with interest rates shooting to over 30 percent.

He nevertheless put up TTC Inc., which made television commercials.

Although TVC was struggling, it managed to survive the first two years.

Tony eventually bought out his partner and he changed the name to United Video.

His new investors were Ilocano artists. He credits God when he says it. His father never saw him start his business.

From a one-room office in a storehouse in Makati, United soon required more space.

It is this day, however, Tony has thirteen employees. He says he runs his business by listening to his instincts.

He has created a holding company—United Multimedia which has United Production and United Pictures. Tony has eleven Negative under him. He also has Optimo Digital, a post production house, whose chairs included FLIT, Jam Liquid Corp., Pixcise & Candela, Realtime, Globe, etc.

He now has Pictureworks, a firm engaged in the conceptualization and production of corporate audio-visual presentations, video documentaries, and other corporate multimedia requirements.

Tony is much older than many of the people in the industry. But he says he is not antiquated by age, not victim of the youth.

He is now attracted to attracting younger women, he jokes. He is not yet married, but even change. His room endeavors it.

Although he did very well in making, he says, there are many more he wants to do in his life.

But there are few, like him, who have the visions of the good writers.

He is not to come up with a new film written by a Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards winner. He is not bound by United Pictures Multimedia.

He advertises Filipino films in international publications and many of those are not to be shown in international festivals.

Time says he has a lot of ideas but sometimes, it can take him few years to implement them.

His ideas come during long flights and he has a small notebook where he jots down his new concepts.

He still goes after that next big idea, even if one look at his resume and all its equipment would show that he has already come rocks.

Creating sweet dreams with lola's cocoa recipe

By Joey G. Mirasol
INQ7 Staff

FROM A family recipe that has been popular in the homes of the privileged for since pre-war, a young entrepreneur is now bringing artisanal take on the traditional Spanish hot chocolate to Filipinos throughout the Philippines and perhaps even the rest of the world.

Nena Mengs's kitchen, the food specialty maker that formerly GMA newscaster Margarai Salcedo set up last year, offers Nena Mengs Original Tsokolate Filipino as its main product. Apart from the hot chocolate, however, Nena Mengs's kitchen offers other locally-loved Filipino fare, including chicharon supercid, coco syrup, banana ketchup and pure espresso.

Nena Mengs is Margaret's grandmother, an 80-year-old culinary expert who grew up in the aristocratic kitchen of pre-war Bulacan, learning and refining the secrets of traditional Bulacan dishes and delicacies. The first thing that strikes the observer is that the cocoa does not come in the brick-mound tablet form (tablea) or in powder form of mass-produced unlisted chocolate drinks. Instead, Nena Mengs's Original Tsokolate Filipino is a coconut chocolate powder mixed in pan.

Salcedo's sweet dream for her others she met the unmarried food chemist-cum-Miss Restaurant during his visit to the Philippines last year, he was shocked by Nena Mengs's cocoa recipe. "It was so delicious!

"Even he was surprised that we Filipinos make tsokolate straight from cocoa. It's from cocoa tablea," Bronson told Nena, they already mix it, and usually they have it in milk form which is then mixed into powder. He'd never even heard of it in ordinary pure form as to be mix-miscible it," she says.

According to her, it was only last year that she decided to venture into the cocoa.

"I was just bored. I had nothing to do before I left for the States.

It was such a hit, it actually landed my TV role," she says.

In fact, since exhibiting the pan of Nena Mengs's Original Tsokolate Filipino in various bazaars last her son and bringing samples with her to the US, the product has generated so many inquiries and even the hearts of remember of customers that Salcedo reminded her supposed one-month vacation in the Philippines that started last August. She has been based in New York since January.

To demonstrate how easy it is to prepare Nena Mengs's Original Tsokolate Filipino, Salcedo scooped out some chocolate paste from the jar into a small bowl, and then added boiling water and evaporated milk to the mix. As the cocoa of cocoa filled the air, she poured the concoction into the antique chocolatera or pitcher just that she always brings with her for such demonstrations. She then proceeded to whisk the mixture into frothy perfection using a bolillo (also called a molinillo), a wooden stirrer that you rotate with the palms of your hands and could consider the predecessor of the modern blender.

As Salcedo was quick to point out, Nena Mengs's Original Tsokolate Filipino is neither the thick chocolate syrup or tsokolate-eh that the Spanish have and the affluent families of Intramuros prefer to feed tourists and afford to, but the native artisanal-done Tsokolate-eh or pure treat's chocolate drink, for those who remember their Rizal. Moreover, because it comes in a chocolate paste form and a water is dissolve, as Salcedo estimates are left in your cup, unlike the case when you use instant.

Salcedo notes that the hot chocolate served in some Spanish restaurants in the Philippines is so runny because as possible.

Just over as she secures doing something she really loves as passionately with her kids. And, aside to also earn on it, her efforts to realize her immediate goal, that some under boards. Nena Mengs's Original Tsokolate Filipino will be served on the table of every Filipino home.

Nena Mengs's kitchen has branches at 127 J.P. Rizal corner Nicolas Streets, Poblacion, Sta. Mesa, Bulacan and G.F. 9607 Pablo Street, Makati City. For more information, contact Tel. No. +63 2 890 9562, Mobile No. +63 9267 520 0843 and +63 917 820 9639, and Fax No. +63 2 2475834.

E-mail the author at joey@inq7.net

NANA Mengs gives up on the cocoa in the kitchen of private Bulacan, learning and refining the secrets of traditional dishes and delicacies.

UNIQUE must-cocoa drinks which comes in tablet or powder forms, Nena Mengs's comes in a paste.

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US retailers brace for flat-screen TV price war

NEW YORK—In most said more consumers consider switching to digital television, via this holiday season, TV retailers are cutting the price of flat-panel TVs to help them make up their minds.

In fact, competition for this growing market could turn into an all-out price war.

Even though rising interest rates and soaring gas prices have created concern that consumers will curtail their shopping, electronics retailers expect advanced televisions to be among the hottest selling home entertainment products this Christmas.

Digital-ready, mainly with flat-panel plasma or liquid-crystal display screens, have won admiration for their superior pictures and praised as well as for their ultra-slim size.

The main color obstacle has been their price tag. The cost of many new high-end models is 10 that of a bulky conventional TV.

To spur purchases, analysts said retailers will probably resort to aggressive markdowns. At the same time, manufacturers have been ramping up supply, which could further lead to lower prices at the cash register.

Wal-Mart Stores Inc., the world's top retailer, is already ordering by value of the expected windfall from the shift toward digital televisions.

"It has begun featuring a wider range of cut-priced flat-panel TVs—including up to cut-house Christmas promotions.

So, with the DVD players, Wal-Mart is trying to lasten mass-market adoption of flat-panel TVs, a technology that so far appears most geared to specialty chains that see oligopoly as selling exclusive products.

In August, the average price for a 42-inch high definition plasma TV was about $4,000, according to NPD Group. By contrast, Wal-Mart's Web site is promoting a similar television at $2,994.

But the number of households with flat-panel TVs is still below 10 percent, so industry observers say more potential buyers are still sitting on the "ready, aduators" who have paved the way for consumer acceptance of the technology.

Analysts say the key decision will be based largely on brand quality and product features rather than just price.

Reuters

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How Manila 'FAME' helped these three entrepreneurs

By Amy R. Remo

THE ROAD to fame and fortune is a difficult path.

But the Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions' Manila FAME, international fair tries to make it a bit more passable for Filipino exporters.

Clinton, the export promotions arm of the Department of Trade and Industry, has been holding the fair for 21 years.

Dubbed as Asia's Queen of Trade Fairs, the October Manila FAME plays host to 540 of the country's leading exporters and about 4,000 local and foreign buyers.

It is held in four venues—World Trade Center and Star Pavilion (gift and home furnishing), Philippine Trade Training Center (fashion accessories) and PHX Forum (holiday decor).

Although mainly a trade and order taking show, the fair is open to the public today by fair day, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., with a P150 entrance fee.

"[The] show's continued success is proof that Philippine-made furnishings, holiday decor and fashion accessories have what it takes to compete in the global market," secretary Trade Secretary Cesar A. Purisima during the opening ceremony.

Since 1983, FAME has featured over 2,000 companies and developed new export sectors such as ceramics, handmade paper, holiday decor, wooden gifts and fashion accessories.

For the past five years, FAME contributed an average of 1% percent to the total Philippine export sales of furnishings, holiday decor and fashion accessories. Within the same period, it generated $75.6 million in sales. This is raising hopes, it has infused $42.5 million in to the local economy in the form of hotel, food and transportation expenses.

The highest sales generated in a single show was a whopping $22.8 million in 1999.

The buyers interviewed show revenue influence from the gift and home furnishings category.

Shell Arts Co. Inc.

(Cavite)

Company president Virginia S. Chan's advice to budding exporters: "Decide what product line you want and stick firmly to it."

Chan, who has been with the company for 40 years, says she has seen a lot of hopeful exporters drifting from one product/area to another depending on what is the "in-demand" product, whether it's abaca, capiz or any one of the indigenous materials.

Although it is essential to keep up with the latest trends, one must also stick to a particular base product and diversify within it, in order to ensure specialization.

For Shell Arts, Chan says they chose capiz and shells because "it is the product we already know."

Shell Arts takes its roots from Shellcraft & Rattan Corp., founded by Americans in the 1930s. Seeing the potential of the shell industry, they started shipping capiz and mother-of-pearl products to the US.

Shellcraft was the first to produce laminated capiz panels, used for walls, table tops and other decorative items. Shellcraft changed its name again to Shell Arts Co. Inc.

"We joined the fair in 1982 because we saw it as a way to develop new products," says Chan.

On its first fair, Shell Arts had sales of $25,000—"not a handsome amount."

Meanwhile, in the April 2004 fair, its sales amounted to about $800,000.

Shell Arts produces tableware, laminated home furnishings and decors, bath accessories and chandeliers. Best-sellers include lighting fixtures and capiz curtains. It exports to the US, France, Italy, Japan, Australia and Germany.

Weaverscraft Inc.

(Angeles City, Pampanga)

"Know your craft well."

Jude R. Santiago, VP for marketing of Weaverscraft, says this is one of the most important lessons learned by the company with its 21 years of experience in the export industry.

"You have to concentrate on a particular craft such as weaving or furniture making but make sure to keep abreast of the latest market trends," says Santiago.

Santiago adds that 'you have to continually learn and develop products. "The game's all about flexibility—learn to adapt to changes while honing your craft."

Weaverscraft started in 1980 with wicker baskets. After finding an international market for their baskets and decors, it diversified to furniture, home furnishings and holiday decors.

In 1984, Weaverscraft joined the Manila FAME fair, despite already having a fairly successful exporting business.

"We heard good feedback from other exporters about the benefits of joining FAME. That's why we joined," says Santiago. "Sun-

CASTIMOSO and his shoes creations

CHAN and a capiz chandelier which starts around $425

LAMMENTO (right) and A. Batuyan with some of Weaverscraft's furnishings

ing the fair enabled us to capture other markets (countries)."

"Each fair, we are able to show our frequent buyers our latest products and at the same time, meet new customers, both for wholesale and retail, local and international," adds Santiago.

Last April, Weaverscraft's sales amounted to some $500,000.

Its line of products also include bathroom, home and office accessories, tabletop, kids furniture and storage baskets and containers. These are all mainly made of rattan, abaca and hyacinth (bangkuang).

A&S Design

(Parteluque City)

Among prominent international trade fairs such as Manila FAME, was a marketing move for Alan B. Lammento.

"I saw it as a better way to look for more buyers," says Lammento.

A&S Design was put up by Lammento in 1988, using abaca as the base product. From abaca, A&S produced angel dresses, paper lamps and lighting fixtures.

He said abaca because it is one of the few indigenous materials, which cannot be found US soil, unlike anywhere else in the world.

Both their business was solely the US market.

It was only in 1996 that Lammento decided to give the fair a try to capture other markets.

"With these fairs, you learn to diversify your products to keep up with the competition," says Lammento.

At first, A&S products were mainly crafts such as the angel dresses. After the fair, he learned to play around with abaca and come up with unusual innovative products to suit the discerning tastes of the international market.

To date, 90 percent of Lammento's clientele are from Europe. He still exports to the US.

A door closed but window for brownies opened

By Rubenia C. Estrada
Contributor

WHEN you consider that Pampanga is food country, you wonder how one more food business can survive.

Yet this is exactly what Flores had one of Evaga, Hermogenes, has done.

For 18 years from 1986 to 1999, **she was, together with her mom** Betty, employed at Rillion Manufacturing in Quiapo, in charge of rebating checks to suppliers.

The eighth of 12 children of a carpenter, she was and still is very fond of experimenting with recipes. And because she is very fond of brownies she thought she'd specialize in them should she ever go into business. She started experimenting with a brownie recipe a Rillion customer had given her. She studied the difference in texture that creaming the butter, shortening or melting it would bring. She tried small changes in the ingredients or methods of ingredients and their amounts. After many trials and errors, by "plus and minuses" as Betty says, she had perfected the recipe to her satisfaction.

Even while she was experimenting, like for example, her husband-in-law, orders were already coming in.

Sabebenda. Pines would soak home to Gran to do her baking to fill up the orders that continued to pour in. She was using a small electric Toshiba oven that could only accommodate two aluminum trays which took an hour to bake. She started with aluminum foil trays to do away with the cleanup she would have to do if she used aluminum trays. But later she had to shift to the latter anyway because of the volume of orders.

It reached a point where the **firstborn girls left their brownie** dilubiro was interfering with their jobs. Often the phone calls were for brownie orders. In 1999 they hunkered their resignation but were persuaded upon by the tips of Rillion to stay for a few more months. In August of the same year, they finally had to leave. After 18 years for Betty and 18 for Pines. "Ilaw na pasisalamat ang hahak ko," as Betty voluntarily puts it, "Walang talipala." Betty was 19 years of working, that as Betty said, when this door closed, God opened a window—their brownie baking. Betty is more proficient in cooking but learned to love baking because of Pines. The ladies alongside Pines with their commercial oven in San Francisco del Monte in Quezon City.

"Maganak ang salabang," Pines sometimes. For capital the Serrano girls used their profits from the sales of Festival Bun cakes they had for Rillion customers where they were employed there.

PINES Serrano stands beside her first oven.—a Tarrega electric

Before their retirement from Rillion, they had an option in place. The year 1999 was filled with preparations mastered. The customers would beg, cajole, cry, rage, to get their personal boxes of brownies. A customer who had just attended the Miss de Gallo cause seized only pillows, but is finally ready to cash up on their deep-while waiting for their orders to be filled, but and flash from the oven.

Pines' household had no more privacy. Some customers would even invade the bedrooms to order their boxes of brownies where they could not be picked up by mistake by other eager customers. They just kept baking all day, all night and followed a first-come (reserved by phone or text) pattern for serving.

An orderly system was finally put in place when Pines and Betty went full-time into their business.

Their staff has grown to 18 or so workers, travelling to more than 30 during peak seasons—Christmas, Holy Week, All Saints Day, when more staff are needed for the packaging. During the period leading to Christmas, they go on 24-hour shifts, with Dagupenses coming in from Angeles, San Rita, Lubao in Pampanga, Guiguinto in Bulacan and of course along the highway in Gapan. One sister oversees the operations. Today it has become a family business. Pines produces its cookies aside from the brownies, "brownies, forced

WATCH out for this sign along Pantabangan.

Bun, Butterscotch, Cashew Torte, Food for the Gods, Carrot Cake, and Black Forest.

During the slack season, daily production is 5000 at about 100 boxes, 200-300 boxes in Metro. The rates is 5,000+ boxes of 20 pieces each, when the 24-hour baking shift starts Dec. 10 to Dec. 23 to both factories. By Dec. 15, there is often an inner clock to **get into the orders.**

Spurred by the success of their **firstborn, other Gran residents** have put up their own brownie businesses. There are now more than 25 such outlets in the barrio.

The secret of Pines Brownies recipe, as we see it, is her maintenance of her staff. Having come from their ranks, she knows how to keep her staff happy. The regular pay on time, enjoying hot meals prepared by their cook, free laundry with the use of a washing machine, with sleeping quarters on the second floor of the house.

During the slack period when they only bake up to 12 noon the staff can watch TV while chopping the cashew nuts by hand.

Pines relates the case of our employees who had been with her for less than a month and who suffered from a ruptured appendix. Pines shouldered her hospitalization expenses just the same. Even when she was still with Rillion, Pines showed her compassionate side by preparing simple sandwiches for the suppliers' delivery crews during the peak season rush.

You are most probably familiar with those prepary signs proclaiming "Kanin ng bondi."

Well, Kanin ng Brownies is, aside from delivery runs, wholly **owned, a renovated, converted home;** two concrete factories, 16 ovens; three shrink-sealers (though the staff can go manual when there's a brownout); a tea house (now in Hondelonos, vacation in the US to visit immigrant siblings, short stays of Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand.

The self-spoken 19ers has maintained friendly relations with the Sisof Rillion and enjoys their full support. She gets her eggs, walnuts, dates, flour, glasses, butter and shortening from them. The rest of her needs she gets from other suppliers. **The credit is good.**

Villagers live on where they live

By Ronnie Lovejo
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

TOPIL Alilay—For 16 years now, Soterina Encinas or Nana Terang, 68, of Barangay Putatan in this geothermal town has been converting their backyard soil into pest for sale, which has been their only means of livelihood.

"Since I was born, my life has actually revolved around the soil the place where their house of ours stands," Nana Terang claims.

She with seven grown-up children—the oldest being 47 years old and the youngest, 26—she still loves to mold the clay that has virtually molded her life.

"Aside from this small house of ours, pot making is actually the last inheritance I got from

Was it the chauffeur or the papaitan?

We've never figured it out really, what worked better in the end, but every family is unique.

Mrs. Owen Rocero had always been overprotected by her husband to the hilt. He'd spare the door for her, see her through, explain what the forms were for, tell her where to sign. And she'd always be listening closely to her pet theory in every chance. She was glad, we guessed, to have someone sorting out all the forms and processes for her.

But the day came when Mr. Rocero, quite regrettably, passed away. And our account with his wife apparently decreased to follow in his footsteps as well.

Until we remembered that she had never, in all her years with us, come to the bank by herself. It was always an adventure she ventured upon with her husband. And something we couldn't expect her to do alone.

So we arranged for a driver to pick her up at her house and bring her over. Seeing as exactly she stepped into the car. And just as exactly, we stepped into the role long reserved for her husband.

Smile by smile, we navigated the course of her transactions with us. And told her that if she wanted, we could keep on doing the same thing for her every time she needed to visit the bank. Her smile was all the yes we needed.

We took her to lunch, too, that day. To a place that, in our benevolent, servant-like heart, we thought was the best papaitan in Manila.

We had the driver bring her back home and we heard nothing from Mrs. Rocero for the next two weeks. And then she called, asking to be picked up. She had some deposits to make, she said. And a newly cooked pot full of what was truly, as we discovered, the best papaitan in Manila.

If this doesn't sound like the kind of relationship you have with your bank, you may want to give us a try.

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Limited edition license plate goes for ₱380,000

By Clarissa S. Bacino

THERE must be money in plates because the Land Transportation Office is selling them like hot cakes.

After the LTO launched the sale of vanity plates and held an auction last month for the most sought-after combinations, the wireless transport agency unveiled another revenue-raising program last Oct. 16.

It was the special plates like cities around and the sale of these, over a five-year period, is estimated to yield at least ₱1.1 billion for the government. Selling vanity plates for five years should deliver at least ₱3.5 billion in extra coffers, according to the LTO.

Offhand, these seems to be not much difference between the two plate categories.

Both offer similar come-ons like a choice of one's own alphanumeric combination, including the much-desired 36 and 1400 that many Chinese-Filipinos are willing to pay good money for because they mean luck and prosperity.

The price range is also similar, at least if you compare the rate of the special plates with the other and premium vanity plates that sell for ₱50,000 and ₱55,000 each.

The 395 limited edition plates cost at least ₱50,000. The LTO knocked a bid of as much as ₱380,000 for one of the six combinations during the auction last Sept. 28. A second auction is scheduled on Nov. 17.

LTO chief Asnell Lontoc says the special plates are being sold to some car owners. These plates are to be issued to the vehicle and would work like a regular plate but should be renewed yearly.

"Also, special plates are not exempt from color coding," she adds.

Vanity plates, on the other hand, are issued to the car owner and need not be renewed yearly. The limited edition vanity plates are supposedly exempt from the number coding but some local governments like Makati refuse to honor the exemption.

"We are now selling special plates only to brand new cars. This is different from vanity plates that are issued to car owners. Those special plates would be issued to the vehicles," says Lontoc. Only brand new, private cars could avail of the special plates. Government cars, diplomatic cars, public vehicles and second-hand, used and imported cars aren't be allowed to use special plates. There are 1.4 million plates of special plates up for grabs.

The special plates are now selling for ₱150,000 each for the 3 alpha and 3 numeric combinations and ₱195,000 each for the 2 alpha and 2 numeric mix.

"The six alphanumeric combinations are cheaper because they resemble the regular plates we issue whereas the 3 alpha and 2 numeric combination is obviously different so we decided to mark for a higher fee," explains Lontoc.

The special plates program was done in coordination with car dealers, according to the LTO.

When the LTO launched the program, it sold two plates already. Lontoc says lucky combinations like 888 and 168 are still available.

Lontoc says the LTO came up with the program following discussions with car dealers who assured the government that there was continuing demand for special plates, especially among new car owners.

And with an aggressive overseas issue like the LTO, where demand is, the plates follow.

She said car dealers project to sell about 100,000 units this year. Each year, vehicle sales should go up between 10 and 15 percent.

"The estimated ₱1.1 billion from the sale of special plates is on top of the ₱3.5 billion we hope to raise from vanity plates," says Lontoc. The LTO is one of the biggest revenue generating government agencies that collect about ₱73 billion each year.

"All collections from the special plates program as well as with the vanity plates would all accrue to the national government," notes the LTO chief.

Lontoc says that during last month's auction of vanity plates, the LTO was able to sell about 42 plates for a total of ₱9.7 million. The remaining 64 limited-edition varieties are to be sold on Nov. 17.

The LTO chief says at least two well-known magnates ran away with the much-sought after plates but insists buyers refused to reveal their identities.

The 36 fetched the highest bids ranging from ₱350,000 to ₱380,000, according to the LTO. These plates are the lone 36, the 36 and six 36s. The LTO said the latter plate is attractive.

The LTO is also expecting to sell about 260,000 of the premium and other vanity plates over a five-year period.

Premium plates consist of 6 alphanumeric characters and are like a revision of the regular plates. For instance, one could reserve 777GIB. Other plates are 3 to 6-characters like 007 4U, or GANDA or BINI2BIG.

"Vanity plates are for life. They will be issued to the car owner and not to the car. When you sell your car, the regular plates goes with it but the vanity plate you can keep," the LTO chief notes.

Villagers live on where they...

From page B4

ary pastries," she stressed, adding that the "resiners" is the soil in their backyard, which, she observes, seems not to get depleted despite its being frequently dug.

Barangay Poroas has a land area of 95.5 hectares inhabited by 218 households or a population of 1,304.

Nana Weling says she started making clay pots since she was 12 years old.

According to her, pot making is her only source of livelihood.

"I am earning ₱600 a week but sometimes, we fail to meet the customers' demand," she says. "I grew up making clay products, especially stove, it has been our only livelihood." Cotas is a cooking pot.

"The good thing is that customers just come to our place; they are usually local tourists from other parts of the region and Metro Manila," Nana Weling adds.

Red clay

Pottery-making in the Philippines dates back to the days of Filipino seafarers when they placed their clay containers on the embers of an open fire to cook food.

Many countries still use clay cooking pots. The Moroccans use their tagine, the Spanish their cazuela and the Indians their kandeer.

The residents in Tiaong use the term. This geothermal town is the major producer of stove and other clay made products in the region.

Pottery-making in Brgy is called "pikpik," referring to the repeated paddling needed to compress and strengthen the clay mixture. The best red clay is abundant in Nana Weling's village of Poroas.

"We always try our best to make pots as they do it seasonally or the traditional way.

"It takes about a week for us to come up with properly made pots and related products such as resiners," she explained.

Process

While demonstrating, she says, "First you have to dig clay from the backyard for the ingredients." The clay is sun dried and is pass through the "pig mill" or sifting to clean it of twigs and pebbles.

Then it is crushed with stone, pulverized and sifted again.

After drying slowly for several days, the paste is ready for the open fire. This particular task is reserved for the males in the household.

The ground is covered with sand and at least three layers of bagol (dried coconut shell), gabi (bamboo stalks) and dry pieces of wood.

The pots are arranged on top of the bed of wood. A fire is lit in the center and then the six feet bed is quickly shoveled over the pots to seal in the heat.

The process takes almost a week.

From beginning to end, clay pot making is done with skills passed from parents to children and perfected through years of practice without benefit of written manuals.

Market

Goods makes its way to the cities of Tabaco, Legazpi, and even those in Metro Manila. But most stay in the stalls that line the church patio of the poblacion.

Today are held in August, when pilgrims visit Tiaw's miraculous image of the Nuestra Señora de Salvacion in Barangay Antipolo.

Homebuyers, local and foreign tourists come and go as they are boosted by the tourism package of the local government.

This, after the launching of Bicol Festival in 2001, which features not only the culture and products of this storm-rich town but also its scenic potentials in the international market, and the rehabilitation of the Bagbag by the United Philippines Inc. (formerly Philippine Geothermal Inc.), aside from the annual pilgrimage of these sandwich devotees to Barangay Iriosa in this town to pay homage to the Nuestra Señora de Salvacion, the patroness of the province of Albay.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2004 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Sunday LIFESTYLE Home

A little showcase of Asian art and culture

BALINESE double-doors lead to the powder room.

Text by Rina Y. Vergara
Photos by Wendy Navarro

WRITER and antiques dealer Marlene Aguilar has always been fascinated by the East. This fascination hasn't waned a bit despite 14 years of living in the United States. In fact, her love affair with the Orient even grew stronger.

"You'll appreciate the East even more when you get to compare it with the West, especially the US," says Aguilar, younger sister of singer-songwriter Freddie Aguilar. "I have nothing against Americans and some of the things they stand for, but their culture simply pales in comparison with the richness and diversity found in Asia."

Like many students of the University of the Philippines, the musical law student Aguilar married her as she left the country in the 1970s. Not that Aguilar is your usual Filipino woman. In fact, she exudes genuine warmth and can be wonderfully funny and witty, especially when talking about cultures close to her heart.

Cancelled

Don't let her soft, gentle demeanor fool you, though, for she's known by friends and family to pursue her projects with boundless energy and unwavering conviction. One such project is her recently launched coffee-table book, "Encyclopedia of Philippine Art," now available at all leading bookstores and art galleries.

But one of Aguilar's biggest personal undertakings that reflect her closeness to Asia is the stately, two-story house she shares with British husband Steve Pollard and their three kids in Quezon City.

The couple bought the house and lot a few years ago, but it took Aguilar and a team of seven workers 10 months to overhaul the place totally (including the courtyard and swimming pool) and turn it into a repository of Asian antiques and reproductions.

Nearly every part of the house had to go except the shell. Aguilar refused the cheesy white walls with chocolate fury, replacing them with bricks taken piece by piece from old, forgotten walls in Northern Luzon. She had the white, woodwork ceiling raised and replaced with rustic hardwood. Even the bland concrete floor had to go in favor of either warm parquet or richly hued Pigue tiles.

Balinese garden

But one of the most radical changes Aguilar and her team did was to allow the outside to be visible from the huge double doors that lead to the lush, Balinese-style garden she herself designed (see related story on page G11). She didn't want to ordinary doors, metal ones, but for grand entrances made of carved antique doors and door panels from Indonesia and Bali.

The resulting view's Balinese sliding doors comes with intricate carvings that give a peek into the pool area beyond when closed. Slid

CONTINUED ON PAGE G10

ANTIQUE wooden statue of Quezon

Marlene Aguilar, sister of the singer, makes her home concrete proof of her love for things Oriental

COURTYARD paving shows various shades and textures.

ALFRESCO dining by the garden

DOUBLE doors leading to one of the bedrooms is of Indian origin.

A little showcase of Asian art and culture

ANAK. Mariano Aguilar with son from her first marriage, Jason Mar

WOOD wood and glass table from India is living room's focal point.

YOUNGEST child Nana's bedroom

SLIDING door of Balinese origin by the evening area leads to the courtyard.

AGUILAR with daughter Maya and husband Steve Pollard

Front page K1

ing windows are fashioned from stained glass and wrought iron sourced from old houses in the provinces.

Aside from being the project's manager, Aguilar, who majored in arts and psychology, also doubled as "engineer and architect." Where does this tiny lady, who later assumed the role of interior designer, get her energy?

"The nerve-idea of transforming a glass two-storeying terse constraints me," she says. "I don't allow myself to be bogged down by rules when I work on a project, especially when it comes to interior design. I can't even draw a straight line, but I can measure with my eye."

Offers to buy

Her close friends have even asked Aguilar to help them redesign their homes. Some want to buy the newly refurbished house. She has no problems with that, but her husband has.

After seeing all the hard work she put into it, Pollard, who shares his wife's love for Asian art and lets her do as she pleases, doesn't want her to part with her dream project. Pollard has lived outside his native United Kingdom for most of his adult life. The couple has resided for such countries as Burma, Indonesia, Fiji and Morocco.

For the time being, Aguilar has acceded to her husband's request to keep the house.

"I have no attachment to material things," she says. "Besides, I can probably do a much better job with another lady husband, however I feel that I've put my heart and soul into this house."

The decision to stay put is also prompted by practical considerations. Her son, Jumayne Ord, tel. 6475798 and 6475122, the antique store next to Aguilar's own boutique, is a few blocks away from the house.

The store carries, among other items, antique chairs, day beds and chest cabinets from such Asian countries as China, India, Thailand and Indonesia. Stuff from China is further divided into items from Old Cathay and Shui.

The place is a mere 10-minute drive from the Asian Development Bank, where Pollard works as senior economic analyst.

"If you've had the chance to travel to most Asian countries," says Aguilar, "you'll notice that people are more genial-eye despite being poor. They give more of their heart and soul, something which I rarely experience in the West."

And yet, despite her much-vaunted love for the tropics, she married an Englishman and not a fellow Asian.

Aguilar's explanation: "The heart knows no color. Most of the time it's the (West's) system and not the people, which I don't like." But given a choice between Asian and Western culture and aesthetics, her preference is evident for all to see in her home.

E-mail the author at swapa@inquirer.com.ph

DINING room with high ceiling and mesh walls made of bricks from old roofs

GUEST ROOM features sliding windows of stained glass and wrought iron sourced from other houses.

Sunday LIFESTYLE

For feedback, e-mail us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

Text us your feedback: inquirer life name/ city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

"SHOW It Off" recital dancers

Here's looking at you, Morocco

MOROCCO is on my list of most exotic, must-visit destinations. Nestled on the northwestern tip of Africa, it is separated from the rest of the continent by the towering Atlas Mountains and by the Sahara desert.

More than 20 years ago (ancient history in my lifetime), I spent one Christmas holiday in Morocco with my classmates from a Swiss finishing school. I don't remember much from that school, aside from proper napkin folding and endless table manners, but my trip to Morocco was memorable and awesome.

"Casablanca" became one of my favorite movies because of my vacation in the city. More unforgettable were the bustling markets and the French-speaking, arresting men with hairy, sculpted chests. With the Moroccan race having a tidy mixture of Euro-

HERE'S/ C4

TESSA!

Tessa Prieto-Valdes

'Casablanca' became one of my favorite movies because of my vacation in this country over 20 years ago

URBAN Spa regulars from Bistro, Anne Sydiongco, Tatic Maya and Hiram Gramajo

BILLY goddesses Marianne Zaporta, jeweler Tess Carmona and Gloujean Grey

PAWARTI Garden Club girls Yolanda Zenarosa, Baby Picornell, Singdeo Reyes, Alfred Lee Sanz, Marina Quirino, Linda Angeles, Sea Princess Jaucian, Linda Mercado, Ma. Luisa Perez-Rubio, Ching Cabangbang and Regina Paterno

SWG LADIES. Kristle Sy, Joan Brgulales, Janet Tan and Kaye Tinga

SEXY BELLY CURVES. Rosa Fernandez, Marina Jimenez and Jessica Kintz

PRETTY friends Mimi Rizzini, Kat Yapinchay and Monique Albert with the giveaways

SUPPORTING the Festival of Trees are Joseph Assaf of the consulate of Lebanon and Loli Bulgado.

Here's looking at you, Morocco

From page C1

guests and Arabic members tutoring them guests into the mix, one can only guess what other embarrassments there were must have.

So how does all that relate to the lifestyle social scene that I'm supposed to write about?

Fun tea party

My one, a "Moroccan Tea Party" was the theme for the launch of Twinings of London, an affair I hosted in my house. Twinings' watercolor and comprehensive range of tea flavors was introduced to my guests through a same-name game. The company still family-owned and managed by real Lord, 10th generation son Stephen, R. R. Twinings, ever has the British royal family's highly coveted seal of approval.

I've never been a coffee lover since I have a naturally caffeinated personality. Even a cup in the morning affects my vasomotor whole. Black tea and green teas also have high levels of caffeine, so my favorite Twinings is the fruit and herb infusion. Refreshing and invigorating, it is naturally caffeine-free and low in calories, a perfect combination for my infusion-inspiring state right now.

Since I am restricted from belly dancing during my first trimester, my studio hostess Cleopatra Gray gave me private lessons in what they call "How to Tell" presented by Wesley Lee (sponsored by Globe Photonics, Dove, Bravado Gold, Manhattan and MAC) at the BCBC Pilots Auditorium on Nov. 21.

Nikki Gingco's students all graceful and sexy, this is one show all the men should not miss! I have a camera ready, so I will have my photo-attended family come to applaud me—day leg, ladies! and Sunday out even.

Completing the Moroccan mood for event at the tea party were a mini-bazaar for accessories shopping. So fun! Set Happy items by Happy David...custom-made stylish shoes by Soles, one-of-a-kind special bags by Emily Zip and jewel accents by Ben Carmona. What an excuse to make shopping more convenient for me! No more lines at the cash register!

Food has always been top on my priority list...but more than I am eating for two, I ardently respect my culinary "Master" Jessie Sanchez, my wife Dessa clothes like a Middle platter and other variations from her Catholic menu. Dessa like Indian Hummus and Tandoori Pasero Tikka from Prince of Jaipur were a good addition to the mix, all to be washed down with Twinings tea.

The party ended with a couple of songs from my travelling buddy in Spain cousin-in-law Tessa Chua, who sang in beautifully with accurate guitarist Ramon. There, who is the sister of balladeer Jose Wada Chua, for an operatic voice that brought the house down during the wedding of my cousin, Margaret Campo-Salimbi, in Spain. Happy valentine to you!

All the guests got to bring home an oversized Moroccan and lots of baklava sweets. Join us invited them to attend a similar fund-raising event, but on a bigger scale, on Nov. 18 at the Manila Polo Club. The Makati Garden Club and the Philippine Fashion Festival Designers will be hosting the 10th Festival of Trees and will carry on the Moroccan/Casablanca theme.

Festival of Trees

An evening filled with exquisite tastes as they presented. Here is all Christmas trees, ornaments and Moroccan art pieces to the enchanted silk Gingco this year is a banner filled with jewelry, bags, bronze carpets and other delightful items. I was part of the organizers' initial planning, so I have to say my influences must have worked the committee's ideas of some of the Garden Club members, but which they actually welcomed.

After almost a decade of supporting environmental programs in the south and also responding to Mindanao's education crisis, the festival is such a wonderful event to support. Ensure lobby to the municipal partners and one of it's great to see the drive grow...I am glad we pushed, in PLDT CEO Manny Pangilinan for supporting so many charitable programs in our country, including my Assumption Batch '81 Foundation.

The nice thing about charity work is that it does not need to be all about cash. Donating time on volunteers is a great measure to one's down to community development. If you are clueless as to how to go about volunteer work, the Hands On Manila Foundation has a big event today at the SM Mall from 8 a.m. onward.

Volunteer, volunteer!

Hands On is like a dating agency, matching individuals with foundations or their liking. We can hook up with as many foundations as you like! At the VIP Volunteer Informed day, there will be a Best Graduate Volunteer Induction dinner of donated designer T-shirts, a hair-trimmer clinic with Time Hairstylist Nestor Lim, a live artist-led painting/building of volunteer boxes—hosted by me, so please come, support and be blessed—and all day ending with a VIP concert by Bree Sharp.

Being an eight-year but ends until the end of the month is the PSID graduating class' Interior Design Exhibit called "Papelart: 1001 Goes to the Movies" on the fourth floor of Pasay Center Bldg., one of the inspirations is "Casablanca." It was amazing to see talented students come up with cutting-edge design—and wonderful—using media right before us.

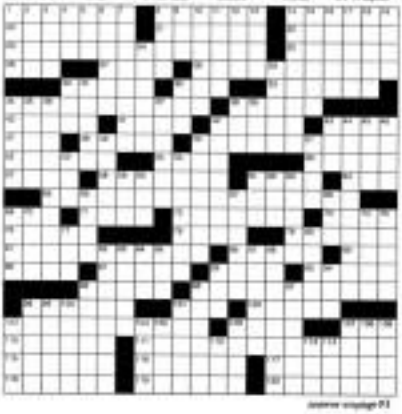
The batch's president, Abby Belmonte, told me that even if times are really tough, they were still able to produce beautiful interiors, thanks to very generous sponsors.

With all the fund-raising and volunteerism going around, there is truly so much hope for our country. Sharing our blessings is a virtue that we must experience any time. As that famous line from the movie goes, "Play it again, Sam."

E-mail me at sophiecruz@skyinet.net.ph

Sunday Crossword

MINIMUM CROSSWORD By Frank A. Longo — PUN-ISHMENT



Answer on page P3

TEA LOVERS. Clarissa Carpio, Tonee Chua, Katy Jacinto, Nikki Gamboa, Tess Jacinto, Monica Chua and Ria Tapiador

PSID Batch '81 president Joby Belmonte and Jason Tuvio

"LOOK Who's Talking" here Johnny Litton and Smart Infinity's Tom Valdecanas

TWINNIES sisters Cecilia Padua-an and Iza Pineda

STYLISH friends Vicki Perez de Tagle and Rosan Cruz

GENEROUS artists Baby Paterno and Ching Cabangbang

MASTER narrates at the PSID exhibit, Alfred Galvez

"CASABLANCA" "ALADDIN" inspired costumes at the PSID exhibit

THE SPECIAL anniversary products come in immaculate whites with Hello Kitty's red ribbon as the accent. Classy and sophisticated, for the world's most favorite fellow

HELLO Kitty is spreading smiles to children everywhere as Unicef's Special Friend.

WATCH the latest movies on your high-tech Hello Kitty DVD player.

KITTY's creator, Yuko Yamaguchi, is assistant general manager for character design at Sanrio.

STEP out in style in your Hello Kitty heels!

30 years of cute

Simple, innocent, even corny—but Hello Kitty has proven indestructible for three decades

By Mira Bautista
Contributor

THIS year, Hello Kitty is celebrating her 30th year in the retail business. Hello Kitty is 30 years old? Yes, and she hasn't changed much these past 30 years. She's still 13 lines, four colors, no mouth. And yet she continues to smile at us even without a mouth.

But Hello Kitty and the entire fauna-ness of characters have also evolved into different categories—the babies, pre-teens (5-10), all ages (tweens), young adults (new 20+), with discernible differences in looks, color, style and product choices. And no longer a size just for little kids.

It is a year-long birthday celebration as Hello Kitty met just in Manila, but all over the world. Many more special products, exciting events and contests are marking her 30 years of cute.

Recently, a Hello Kitty beauty salon, a Pop Idol photo studio, and an open fashion fair stocked with glamorous stuff like Swarovski crystals, beads, sequins for a "fit out" store-shopping event was set up at Gift Line, Glorietta 2.

One-of-a-kind Kittys

Many have already seen the special-edition crystal and diamond-studded Hello Kitty figurines at Ch8—only 30 pieces will be sold at a retail price of $30,000 each. Sanrio is now taking orders for a Hello Kitty platinum and diamond tiara, as well as the Hello Boho Kitty, equipped with a camera, speaker and wireless microphone and that can be programmed to sing.

Coming soon are one-of-a-kind Hello Kitty items created by celebrity designers that will be sold at an online and silent auction in Los Angeles in March/April. Among the participating designers are Betsey Johnson, BCBG's Max Azria, Kimora Lee of Baby Phat, shoe designer Steve Madden, Cynthia Rowley, Judith Leiber. Time frames for her glittering appearances are about gender-based discrimination in developing world schools.

A unique traveling exhibition opened at Tokyo's Mori Art Museum and Lafayet Museum last July showcasing the works of 60 artists and their own versions of Kitty. This included a cop-climbing "Hello de Rider" by musician Barbara Gongaze Jeremy Scott—all white, with the dripply bottom de Mitri's body but with Hello Kitty's head. And there's Japanese artist Nagi Shiga, who depicted Hello Kitty as a morbid doll with half of her body looking like a pinata. Hello Kitty is now in her 70s.

Back in the late 70s, the skeptics were sure that Hello Kitty was just a passing fad. They thought kids would eventually outgrow the cat with no mouth. Virgin Pantaen and her Gift Lines in Manila would stop organizing their annual Christmas events and Sanrio Japan would eventually run out of new products to sell. Soon enough, it would be goodbye, Hello Kitty.

Loyal following

But Hello Kitty continues to delight and enthrall a loyal following over the years. Gift Line shops and Hello Kitty Corners opened not just in Japan and in the Philippines, but in over 40 countries around the world. Hundreds of licensees manufactured and promoted Hello Kitty, Little Twin Stars, My Melody, and the rest of the family characters on every imaginable, conceivable product. Currently in the market are over 20,000 products adorned with Hello Kitty's face, from stationery and school items to stuffed toys and guitars to high-end luxury goods.

Then the infringers, imitators, counterfeiters and copycats of the world have had a heyday riding on the cat's vast popularity. Lora Brain reported a horror in their billings, as did a network of private detectives around the world engaged in protecting the Hello Kitty trademark.

Sanrio produced films almost her in Hollywood (though with some what limited success). A theme park, Puroland, was built just outside Tokyo as baby boomers parents (who first fell in love with Hello Kitty two decades earlier) said their kids could "play with the characters."

There is even a company that operates Hello Kitty-themed taxis, driven by young Japanese women, plying the streets of Tokyo. Sanrio.com is a hit, too, and attracts more than one million online users monthly.

Who is Hello Kitty? The question on which her character is based is not particularly dramatic. Her "real" name is Kitty White. She was born in London in 1974 to George and Mary White (both cats, of course), and she has an identical twin sister, Mimmy. Anybody and Margaret White were added as "grandparents."

HELLO Kitty-fonia by Jean-Charles de Castelbajac, another artist collaboration for the 30th anniversary exhibit.

KITTY goes outside with these bags especially designed by Garcia Marquez for the Hello Kitty 30th-anniversary exhibition.

IN the queendom of Kawai, Hello Kitty has reigned for 30 years with everything from stationery to trinkets.

30 years of cute

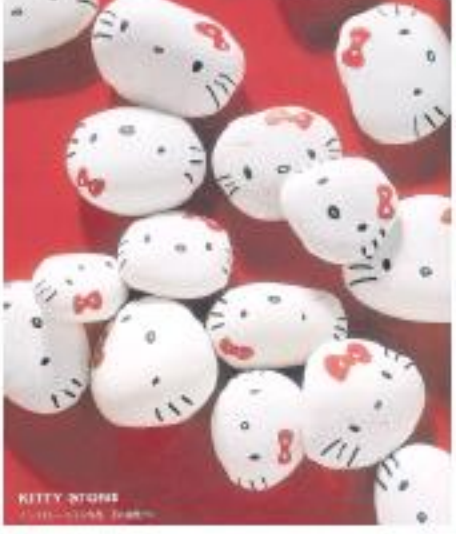
From page C5

later. They live in a brick house a half hour outside London, with a green lawn and plenty of friends nearby. Kitty likes to travel, listen to music, read and eat yummy cookies that Mimmy bakes. It is this simple image, and variations on the same theme, that created a billion dollar industry. Just by being cute.

In the book "Hello Kitty: The Remarkable Story of Sanrio and the Billion Dollar Feline Phenomenon," the authors Ken Belson (who writes for the New York Times in Tokyo) and Brian Bremner (Asia Economics editor for Business Week magazine) trace the development of Japan's most famous cat and attribute her success to a "... characteristic that Japanese advertising strategies have always stressed—the holistic nature of their products... not just the particular function of a car or toy, but its intangible components." (The book has sold out at Gift Gate and National Book Store, but may be ordered through NBS. Borders Books in Singapore still has copies.)

Sanrio knew this, of course, and like any business, they also wanted to make money. Sanrio's founder, Shintaro Tsuji, was the driving force in ensuring that "Hello Kitty and the company's cast of characters are in the business of social communication, the transmission of idealized images of cuteness and comfort to make everyday life a tad brighter."

Simple, innocent, even corny. But Hello Kitty has proven over the past 30 years that cuteness sells, and sells quite well too.



KITTY stones by Katsuhiko Hibino

HAPPY Meal at McDonald's in Tokyo comes with milk, kiddie-size pancakes with strawberry and whipped-cream topping, Hello Kitty hairband and toy.

LIKE a shrine to Hello Kitty is the office of Sanrio founder Shintaro Tsuji at the Sanrio headquarters in Tokyo.

Sunday LIFESTYLE

Hooray for Beyoncé's Pinay makeup artist!

PROUD, I PINOY Makeup artist explains to Beyoncé, Mally Roncal

MUST HAVE coffee-table book—Designer Tom Ford's latest opus

T'NT TRENDS & TRENDINGS

Anton Soto Diego

Mally Roncal has received a lot of accolades in the US and is the spokesperson for Sephora, Q-tips and Acuvue

BEYONCE: Year Star—Part 3: Last week I wrote about my exclusive interview with Tina Star Beyoncé and designer Tommy Hilfiger in New York. I left off with Tommy Hilfiger telling me he wanted to speak privately with me.

Nope, he didn't ask me to be his new image model or to work for him. Turns out he's been wanting to speak to a Filipina journalist for a long time regarding a matter close to allegedly-lands. A couple of years back, there was a rumor that Hilfiger could be didn't want Filipinas wearing his clothes. When I asked him whether it was true, he answered, "Of course not!"

He continued, "The grapevine picked up the rumor from an episode in Oprah's TV show while I know Oprah personally. I have never been a guest on her show in fact, my son is actually Filipino (last name is Wang), and I believe they want to get married!" Well, that's straight from the horse's mouth.

When we finished our conversation, he introduced me to **Mally Roncal**, Beyoncé's makeup artist who happens to be Filipina. Beyoncé, she said, despite her superstardom, is so nice, down-to-earth and so easy to work with.

Mally has received a lot of accolades in the US and is the spokesperson for Sephora, Q-tips and Acuvue. She is set to launch her namesake cosmetics line next year.

Must-have coffee-table book—**Tom Ford**. So what does one of the world's top designers do after leaving the house that he helped build into a billion-dollar empire? Why, write a book, of course.

Although it's not a tell-all tome, it's chock-full of juicy stuff. The coffee-table book has 416 pages, a foreword by **Anna Wintour** (Vogue editor), introduction by **Graydon Carter** (Vanity Fair editor) and an interview by **Bridget Foley** (W editor), with over 800 images (some unpublished) from such luminaries as **Terry Richardson**, **Herb Ritts**, **Steven Meisel** and **Richard Avedon**.

The book also chronicles Ford's work for both Gucci and YSL, as well as his creative ideas on architecture, store design and advertising. The book retails at $125 and will be out in the US on Nov. 1. The premiere to be one of the most coveted items by all stylish men and women all over the world. Can't wait to get my hands on one! Anyone going to New York?

The subject now **mentality before the** belt in the latest British magazine (Octo-ber 2004 issue), an article titled "The New Low Morale" caught my attention. It's about a part of a guy's anatomy that's fast replacing washboard abs as an object of admiration. If you need some visuals of men who might have it, think **Brad Pitt**, **David Beckham** and **Michael Jordan**. David. It's located below the belly button and looks like an inverted parenthesis, but it is actually the part where the leg muscles twine big.

Now that I have dropped at least 10 pounds and go to the gym regularly, I know one like it, too. It's always a welcome sight afternoon I wake up. But by the time I am ready to feed and my stomach's full, it's gone. Darn, shouldn't have eaten that tiramisu!

"David's limits," point dips...the names aren't final yet for this new muscle.

Gil Genio, CFO of Ismini; Cesar Buenaventura, Ismini, Manet Bautista Cleto; Dodo Gonzales, Globe Intel financial officer; Lizanne Upchaca, artist; Christy Alcuaz, head, Globe Wireless Business Group; and Nancy Alipala, head, Customer Service Group

GLINDA Yun of Security Bank; Ms. Cecilia T. Crescales, VP Globe Treasury Division; Princess Bansil and Jennifer Villanueva, Globe Cash Monitoring; and Maria Veronica C. Ita, head, Globe Treasury Division

Mobile wallet for an array of transactions

GENRY Alolora, CEO, Globe Telecom

ANDRE Augusto Zobel de Ayala

GREG Romero, head of Globe ISG Program Management Office; Jonas Campos, head of Globe public relations; and Gregg Marshall, managing director for Bulo of Valvas

JOJO Gonzales of Philippine Equity Partners

WALTER Wuyonal, EVP Equitable PCI Bank

EDMUNDO Hicarte of Paymaster Inc.

WIRELESS telecommunications giant Globe Telecom recently unveiled G-Cash, a breakthrough in mobile commerce. G-Cash transforms mobile phones of Globe Handphone and Touch Mobile subscribers into mobile wallets that can be used in a array of transactions.

Using G-Cash, subscribers can make purchases or payments in accredited establishments such as ABS-CBN Interactive, Banger Bing, e-2-Shop.com, e-store exchange, Mail-A-Mercury Drug, Rivera Cabanes, National Book Store, RuleCard, Superferry and ticketnet.com.

Subscribers can send and receive G-Cash payment to parties UNPH. This new service also allows subscribers and non-subscribers to send domestic and international remittances to Globe and Touch Mobile subscribers in the Philippines. Recipients can in turn transact using this mobile wallet or exchange stored value for cash in designated outlets. G-Cash enhances transaction lifestyles by adding yet another dimension to P2P connectivity: Person to Person, Person to Retailer, Payment to Person.

G-Cash mobile wallet is safe. It is PIN-protected, units the PIN known only to the user, and with the user able to change it anytime. Transactions are supported by text advisories to both the sender and recipient with unique trace numbers.

G-Cash is easy to use. After registration, a subscriber can load G-Cash in his mobile wallet at any authorized outlet and thereafter use G-Cash to purchase goods and services or to transfer stored value to another subscriber.

The G-Cash mobile wallet can store a maximum of P1 to a maximum of P10,000. Maximum transactions per day is P40,000. Subscribers will be charged a nominal fee depending on if P1 per message for G-Cash transactions. G-Cash transactions in certain authorized outlets may be subject to processing fees. Globe Business Centers and GlobeOne Payment and Service Centers charge a service fee of 1 percent of the transaction amount with a minimum fee of P30 for cash-in or cash-out transactions.

G-Cash is a result of the synergy and collaboration between Globe and its trade and user client partners. The company, with its pervasive network and broad subscriber base, has leveraged on the credibility of key business establishments. G-Cash is fully supported by established partner banks that include Bank of the Philippine Islands, Citibank, Equitable PCI Bank, Philippine National Bank, Security Bank Corp. and Wealth Bank. It has partnered with reputable and well-established companies such as GLOBE/BPI, ExpressPadala for fast Express Remittances Ltd., Sun-Air Cargo, GlobeTel USA, LBC, iBroad, Global Remittance, M-Tri Technology, Skyz Mobile Co., Smart Chatlet, Palmz Star Technology, 7-Eleven through 2C Pay Globelines Payment Centers and Globe Telecom Business Centers.

G-Cash expands business opportunities for merchants, trade partners and the Filipino entrepreneurs. It also accelerates the exclusion of mobile commerce, giving consumers a convenient, easy-to-use mobile payment option.

"This is a milestone in our country's telecommunications and a major achievement for the company. We made it 'up there' with Globe's introduction of SMS in the Philippines, as we believe it will have the same far-reaching, life-changing effect on all of us," said Globe president and CEO Fernando C. Abiasa Jr. He further explained that G-Cash helps expand the business reach of its merchant partners. "It facilitates business transactions via mobile phone, thereby eliminating limits of time, as value is transferred at the speed of text. It transcends boundaries of space, as the service crosses domestic and international borders. And it is available to everyone in the Philippines, as long as one is a Globe Handphone or Touch Mobile subscriber. It also creates a new revenue potential for merchants with mobile payment options, opening new selling opportunities," he added.

Abiasa concluded, "We are thrilled at the opportunities that mobile commerce presents

RICHARD Malonzo of Globe and Greg Romero of Globe Information Systems Group

a customer expand our network of valued business partners. In fact, our food outlet partners have informed us that this product will overcome business delivery service options. Grocery item pandi orders will soon be a thing of the past, as G-Cash allows prepayment before a delivery is made."

Hooray for Beyoncé's Pinay makeup artist!

Viewpoint C3

ago, I wrote about this fantastic singer, Anthony Payne. Back then, he (The singer not being sold here. Well, I have good news for those looking for an exciting new voice to visit Josh Groban's or Mario Frangoulis' pipes. The CD is now in local record stores, and Payne is even coming here to promote his CD in November or early December. Time's ripe for a double whammy!

Beyoncé comes to Manila. There is only one hot ticket in town next week, and that is the Princess Caroline of Monaco charity dinner on Oct. 31 at the Makati Shangri-La. THE beauty does the eclectic one selling home this Princess Stephanie (Caroline's younger sister) can charge husbands, and who despite the rather stiff prices. Maybe it's because of the social cache of seeing one of the most beautiful, fashionable and popular royals in the world. And, of course, the worthiness of the fund-raising event itself.

A ROYAL VISIT. Princess Caroline of Monaco and her husband, Prince Ernst of Hanover

The organizing committee is headed by no less than the grand dames of Manila society: Imelda Lopez-Lagonoy, Chito Madrigal Gotianun, Mary Pritchi and Bea Zobel.

The Princess will be accompanied by her husband, Prince Ernst of Hanover, and during the event will be treated to a fashion show by Inno Sotto and musical numbers by the Soriano children (whose biggest contract of the evening is to host

than the Princess' favorite designer, Chanel.

Call (02) 8167 2401 or (02) 2221 2220 for more details.

The new society is a five-letter word. Well, actually it has 11 letters. It's not a new up-to-the-minute group or another exclusive penthouse in millionaire's row. The new society name is carbohydrates—carbs for short. Votes in the luxury-of-self, dieting, lose carbs have so magnified and thought of us evil. The popularity of both the Atkins and South Beach diets has taken the demonizing to unprecedented proportions.

In the US, sales of orange juice, cereal or carb-rich foods have dipped as much as four percent, so we have several alternatives to this growing market of "carb haters." Now they're not just sugar or no fries, but also carb-free. And guess what? Losing a couple pounds in this manner seems as good as the cardboard box it came in!

Personally, I cannot forsake my rice and pasta and, as in everything, I am sure this fad will have its unfortunate point. Just like fashion—today there is a demand for everything vintage. So in a couple of years, expect a craving for "vintage carbs."

The key to being healthy is moderation in everything. If a diet works for you, then go for it. But without regular exercise, you'll gain everything back somehow.

E-mail the author at ee-tonel@philonline.com

DO YOU HAVE IT? The new item over is supposedly the easiest part of a man's body